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Numbering More

I love to argue controversial issues—and even argue with myself. On occasion I've found both of me wrong. I strongly dislike having my position misrepresented, though. Allen Mendenhall ("Atomic Anniversary," *News*, August), in arguing against the use of the bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, mentions my piece on the subject (*Sins of Omission*, July 2009) and says, "McGrath concluded that the bombs ultimately saved thousands of American and Japanese lives." For the record, I concluded, "Most of our military leaders thought that our casualties would reach the hundreds of thousands. Secretary of War Henry Stimson told Truman that our casualties could approach one million." I hope that Mendenhall was merely careless in using "thousands" rather than "hundreds of thousands" and "one million." I also said in an exchange with readers (*Polemics & Exchanges*, August 2009) that the bombs, as an alternative to an invasion of the Japanese home islands, saved "hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Japanese." With the record corrected, let the debate begin!

—*Roger D. McGrath*

Mr. Mendenhall Replies:

As a virtually unknown writer, I'm honored that someone of Dr. McGrath's celebrity would consider me a worthy opponent. McGrath characterizes my piece as "arguing against the use of atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki." My argument is more subtle than that. I summarize the position both of those who disapprove of the bombings and of those who support the bombings, using McGrath as representative of the latter position. Then I allow that McGrath's position could be correct, but qualify that such a position would, if true, speak poorly of human beings in general. I'm not arguing that the bombings were moral because the consequences were good, or immoral because the consequences were bad—but rather lamenting human depravity. My overarching purpose was to show how U.S. politicians have used World War II narratives to legitimize military intervention abroad and to justify the continued occupation of places like Okinawa, whose small, local communities lack the political clout necessary to turn away their occupiers. As for the atomic bombings, I might argue that they were necessary, but because I reject consequentialism, I cannot say that they were moral. Arguing that something is necessary is not the same as arguing that something is right. I stand corrected that "thousands" should have read "hundreds of thousands" or "one million." However, from a moral standpoint, the numbers aren't as significant as the deed.

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Those Irrational Californians

by William J. Watkins, Jr.

CALIFORNIA has long been called the land of fruit and nuts. Now a decision by a federal judge stands in the way of anyone who might wish to challenge that description.

In *Perry* v. *Schwarzenegger*, Judge Vaughn R. Walker held that the 6.8 million Californians who voted in favor of Proposition 8, which amended the state constitution to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman, lacked a "rational basis" for their decision. Consequently, Judge Walker struck down Proposition 8 as violating the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Although thousands of years of human history suggest that children are best reared in a home with a mother and father serving as role models, Judge Walker averred that modern times teach that "gender" roles are anachronistic. "Children do not need to be raised by a male parent and a female parent to be well-adjusted, and having both a male and a female parent does not increase the likelihood that a child will be well-adjusted." In fact, Judge Walker concluded that having parents of different sexes is "immaterial" and "irrelevant."

Those 6.8 million irrational Californians were simply acting out of "fear" and an "animus towards gays and lesbians." The belief that heterosexual unions should be preferred in society is based on unfounded "stereotypes." Proponents of traditional marriage live in denial of modernity.

Who is to blame for fanning the flames of fear and hatred? Christ's Church, of course. "Religious beliefs that gay and lesbian relationships are sinful or inferior to heterosexual relationships harm gays and lesbians." To support this judicial finding, Judge Walker cited selected "social science" studies linking orthodox Christian beliefs to "gay bashing." Perhaps sensing a Christian conspiracy, Judge Walker noted that "84 percent of people who attend church weekly voted in favor of Proposition 8."

The nerve of them.

The judge's description of the people as "irrational" is harsh. The dictionary defines *rational* as "having or exercising reason, sound judgment, or good sense." Moreover, the U.S. Supreme Court, when reviewing legislation for rationality, presumes a reasonable basis absent proof of arbitrariness. This is a very deferential standard when properly applied.

Clearly, a law taking sex into account when defining marriage does not lack a rational basis and deprives no one of federal constitutional protections. Californians could rationally deduce that a family structure with married opposite-sex parents is the best social environment in which to bear children. Californians could further conclude that the rearing of children by same-sex couples—who are prohibited by nature from being the biological parents of any child—cannot furnish children with a parental authority figure of each sex. While not everyone agrees with such policies, they are at a minimum rational. And that is all that is required to pass constitutional muster.

The *Perry* decision is but the latest example of the left using the judiciary to gain ground in a culture war that could not otherwise be won through the political process. Because a majority of the people—even in California—believe that marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman, progressives resort to the courts to intervene. Liberal judges then twist constitutional language such as "due process" to write the preferences of the minority into law. No matter how deferential the standard of review is, ingenious jurists always reach the desired result.

If a federal judge can void thousands of years of human history and separate sex from marriage when exercising rational-basis review, one must wonder what limitations, if any, apply to modern judicial authority. ◆

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Pay No Attention

A RECENT ARTICLE in *USA Today* ("Mexico's Violence Not Widespread," August 4) could serve as a case study in why Mexican journalists consider their North American counterparts "hopeless" when it comes to accurate reporting on their country.

The article pretends to correct the public misperception that Mexico on a whole is a dangerous and violent place. On the contrary, the reporter informs us, "official statistics" demonstrate that "much of Mexico has modest murder rates," that murders have been "dropping steadily" over the last ten years, that President Felipe Calderón is right "to insist that the worst violence is confined to certain regions and is mostly among gang members," for, says he, Mexico has "areas and states, especially tourist areas, that have murder rates equal to many countries in Europe."

That Calderón has reasons to discount the violence raging uncontrolled across his land is obvious, but why would an American reporter, and the editors of his paper, so casually take his word for it, as well as accept without question the veracity of Mexican-government statistics?

Charles Bowden, the author of the luminous book *Murder City*, insists that those statistics are pure fiction. An example: The Mexican government reports that the population of El Paso's sister city Ciudad Juárez is between 1.2 and 1.4 million; according to Bowden, it's closer to two million, but the government deliberately undercounts it to make it appear that its existing civil infrastructure is adequate. Why would it not also undercount the murder rate?

What's more, most kidnappings, rapes, and murders in Mexico are never reported because to do so would be not only futile but dangerous. After all, most of the state police in Mexico work for the cartels—85 percent of them, according to a former state policeman turned *sicario* interviewed by Bowden. Also, many of the kidnappings and murders in Mexico are carried out by special police units. And when the cartels do it themselves, they can count on police not to interfere and never to investigate. Killers often finish off their wounded victims in hospital emergency rooms. One gang, known as the Murder Artists, "had three sets of uniforms nicely starched—municipal police, state police, federal police. Also, they would have cars with the proper police insignia on them depending on whatever area they were operating [in] at the moment. Ambulances also would be mimicked."

No one knows the real murder rate in Mexico, but it could be double or even triple the official rate. And, contrary to Calderón, no one is safe. Bowden takes pains to show that much of the violence is random, arbitrary, and inexplicable.

The *USA Today* reporter also cites various Mexican "experts" in support of the Mexican government's claim that Mexico is becoming a safer, better place. Mario Arroyo, a researcher at the Citizen's Institute on Crime Studies, "a Mexico City think tank," says that "if you look at history, today we have fewer murders, both in raw numbers and rates." The cause of this "decline in violence" is "Mexico's stable economy, helped along by the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement." Edna Jaime of Mexico Evaluates, another Mexico City think tank, explains that a 1992 constitutional amendment on land tenure "also helped" reduce violence. "It was," Jaime says, "part of becoming a more modern and civilized country."

Anyone who has read Bowden knows that the cartels are not the only organizations in Mexico to offer people a choice: *plata o plomo* (silver or lead). Were these institutes to report honestly on the corruption and violence endemic in their country, they might well meet a fate worse than the drying up of funds.

"There are," writes Bowden, "two Mexicos. There is the one reported by the U.S. press," and there is the real one, "where the line between the government and the drug world has never existed," "where the war is for drugs [and] the police and the military fight for their share."

—*H.A. Scott Trask*

It's My Party

THE TEA PARTY movement is known to be a haven for those who are disaffected with both political parties and the party line, and who want their voices to be heard. The mainstream media has made great efforts to silence those voices, painting the Tea Partiers as cranks, bigots, and racists.

There is a "democratic forum" at the website Tea Party Nation, which bills itself as part of the Tea Party movement and facilitates Tea Party conventions.

I posted a blog there, advocating an "even handed" U.S. policy toward Israel as a means to achieve a just and lasting peace. I made the case that blanket support of all Israeli actions and positions is not reasonable, and that certain neoconservative writers are being unfair when they claim that "America has now abandoned Israel."

When I returned the following day, I saw that a dozen or so interesting responses had been posted, the comments were evenly divided pro and con, and none were objectionable or racist. The following day, I was banned from the website.

Apparently, there are hidden rules at Tea Party Nation governing discussion and debate on an "open forum." First, I received a two-line message from a commenter who identified himself as Vern Shotwell. He declared, "You are anti-Semitic and also presumed to be a pacifist." Within an hour, I was unable to return to the site, and another message informed me I was no longer a member of Tea Party Nation. I immediately responded to Mr. Shotwell, objecting to his use of defamation with such a highly charged, false, and reckless accusation. I

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insisted that Tea Party Nation either demonstrate specifically where anything in my post was racist, anti-Jewish, or antisemitic, or else retract the charge. No one has responded, and I remain exiled.

The Tea Parties have always claimed to be conservative in outlook. They insist they not affiliated with any political faction and remain nonpartisan, supporting the best candidates—Democratic, Republican, or Independent. The Tea Party supporters' central message is small government and fiscal responsibility—views with which I sympathize. There has never been any mandate of ideological purity on foreign-policy issues.

One week before my excommunication, Tea Party Nation carried cries of outrage at statements by the NAACP charging Tea Partiers with racism. Perhaps they should remember the old adage about people who live in glass houses.

—David Peterson

Blago Nullification

Call it the luck of the Serbs. If deposed Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich had been charged with trying to sell a U.S. Senate seat in the months after September 11, he would have been shipped off to Guantanamo and never heard from again.

But since the economy collapsed in December 2007, Americans have been in a foul mood. Their government couldn't protect their jobs, their homes, their families, or the value of their money—while losing two wars against tribesmen armed with AK-47s.

Blago—his inevitable nickname—was charged by the feds with trying to sell the U.S. Senate seat vacated by President Obama. On August 17, a jury of 12 men and women good and true deadlocked on all but one charge. The one guilty verdict was for lying to the FBI, for which he could receive five years in a federal gulag. "They ought to give you a medal for lying to the FBI," a friend of mine quipped. (The FBI can lie to you all it wants during an interrogation.)

That was the same cheap rap pinned on Martha Stewart, my favorite celebrity. (She encourages ladies to be domestic.) In more just times, lying got you behind bars only when you were under oath.

Juries can try not only the facts of the case but the law itself—an exercise called "jury nullification." Juries can do so openly, by rejecting a specific law. Their finding applies to the specific case they are judging, not the overall law—although repeated nullification of a specific law can effectively negate it. Or they can do so without any explanation, either because they don't want to outrage a jealous judge, or because they know nullification only by intuition. The effect is the same: The accused walks.

Blago's jury clearly used nullification, Iloilo Jones told me. She's executive director of the Fully Informed Jury Association (FIJA)—based in Helena, Montana, not the imperial capital. "People are becoming more concerned about what's going on, especially collusion between prosecutors and judges," she said. "It's becoming apparent that there is a great deal of prosecutorial abuse. We need to educate jurors on what's going on, because both prosecutors and judges work for the government."

In the Blago case, she said, "everybody involved was with the government. The jury wasn't sure what to do. The jurors were weary of the whole political posturing. I'm proud of them. Because they didn't believe he was guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, they did the right thing. They did not let themselves be led by the prosecutor [Patrick J. Fitzgerald]. We hope all jurors maintain a healthy skepticism toward what is presented by a prosecutor."

FIJA, Jones said, now is "incredibly busy" across the country with such programs as the "Lunch Break for Liberty." Volunteers spend one lunch break per week in front of a courthouse distributing FIJA literature, hoping to inform jurors. FIJA also is working on campuses to help students "know you can scrutinize the law. As a juror, you can make sure there's nothing that quashes people's rights."

Fitzgerald is pursuing another trial of Blago on the same counts, funded by an infinite supply of taxpayer money. Yet the process is a usurpation of powers belonging to the people of Illinois, who can try their own officials for corruption—or not. And it represents an executive-branch usurpation of the legislative powers of Congress. According to the Constitution, "Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members." The Senate, even in its debased form, is capable of deciding what to do with seats that are bought and sold.

Blago may be a crook and a scoundrel. But our liberties are kept by winning hard cases. May the charges against him always be nullified.

—John C. Seiler, Jr.

What Consequences?

A consistent trait of ideologues is the failure to see the consequences of their ideologies. Thus it is with antiwar movement's defense of Army Pfc. Bradley Manning, the alleged author of the notorious 90,000-page dump of classified military documents on WikiLeaks.

Libertarians love WikiLeaks because it discloses government secrets—in this case, about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Manning, the Army alleges, leaked the infamous recording of Army helicopter pilots vaporizing Iraqis on the ground and more than 150,000 classified diplomatic cables.

After WikiLeaks published the classified military documents, Swedish authorities suddenly—and suspiciously, some say—targeted WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. Criminal prosecutors arrested him for rape and molestation. Almost as

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quickly, they dropped the rape charges. He stands accused of molestation.

To the antiwar ideologues, Manning is a courageous whistleblower whose conscience could no longer abide an illegal and unjust war. So what he did is right and just. But is it?

Manning's disclosure, the government claims, endangers the lives not only of American GIs but of confidential Afghan and Iraqi sources. WikiLeaks protested that it withheld names to protect them, but according to the *New York Times*, the Taliban is "scouring classified American military documents posted online by the group WikiLeaks for information to help them find and 'punish' Afghan informers." The *Times* also reported that the published documents "gave the names or other identifying features of dozens of Afghan informants, potential defectors and others who were cooperating with American and NATO troops."

In other words, Manning accomplished what he wanted to accomplish: to sabotage the American war effort. For that, the "Free Bradley Manning" Facebook page labels him a hero. The Bards Blog, which you've never heard of and likely won't again, reports that "Bradley Manning is first and foremost a hero" because "he couldn't morally agree with what was going on." Writing at the leftist Common Dreams website, a former intelligence analyst and Army veteran of the Iraq war declares: "I look up to Mr. Manning specifically because he had the guts to do what I didn't: expose the lie that is war."

Manning needn't have released the documents to expose anything. And the antiwar crowd knows it. Anyone with any sense knows our military expeditions in Mesopotamia and the Hindu Kush are disastrous foreign-policy mistakes; they don't need 300,000 classified documents to tell them. Indeed, they knew it before President Bush launched the invasions. That's why they opposed the wars before those documents were generated. Nor did anyone need to see the documents to know Americans are inadvertently, or advertently, killing civilians and committing other atrocities. Some soldiers in all wars commit murder and other crimes, and the leftist news media report them with unrestrained relish.

One can oppose and seek to end unjust wars without leaking secrets and endangering the lives of courageous American soldiers and the indigenous personnel helping them.

As for Manning—yes, he is an avowed and obviously frustrated homosexual. He reportedly leaked the documents because he is upset with the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. But his impulses and motives pale beside his crime: treason.

But for the antiwar crowd, ideology is all. It must prevail, whatever the cost. So what if American boys get killed? The war machine must be stopped! Sacrifices have to be made! Free Bradley Manning! No real patriot would say such things; he recognizes this thinking for what it is: ideological insanity.

Manning is a traitor. He deserves the firing squad. And an antiwar movement that applauds his disloyalty isn't merely antiwar. It's anti-American.

—R. Cort Kirkwood

Standing Straight

THE NOTION of the "French intellectual" makes a decent man reach for a gun. Almost as odious as its Manhattan equivalent, it evokes images of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, Jacques Derrida and Bernard-Henri Lévy. Evil degenerates, enemies of God and man.

Gen. Pierre-Marie Gallois, who died on August 23 in Paris at the age of 99, was a French intellectual of a very different kind. He was a patriotic Frenchman contemptuous of what France has become, a proud European who therefore loathed the European Union, a royalist loyal to the republic, a practicing Catholic who loved the Orthodox Serbs. A good man.

Gallois will be remembered primarily as the architect of France's nuclear-deterrence doctrine. A geopolitical realist who believed in "peace through fear," in 1956 he convinced Charles de Gaulle that France needed her own *force de frappe*, independent of the United States. Some weeks before, he successfully urged the same point on the Socialist prime minister, Guy Mollet. His reasoning was clear: "In the mid-fifties the ballistic missiles could not reach America, but it was obvious that, after some years, these weapons could hit American soil . . . As soon as Americans were on the frontline[,] as we were already, they would change their strategy. Then, my country, and possibly other countries of Europe, had to find a substitute for a North American commitment. The defense of Europe was nonconditional before, but it would be conditional later."

He was right, of course, but the conditionality only became apparent after the Cuban Missile Crisis, six years later.

Three days after speaking to Mollet, Gallois met De Gaulle: "I went to see General de Gaulle at Hotel La Perousse, where every Wednesday evening he was receiving friends . . . I stayed with him until three in the morning, showing him some 40 charts . . . He said that it is not necessary to have the same number of weapons as the other side; what is mandatory is to be capable to *arrachet*—to 'tear off' one arm of the foe. . . . He said to me, 'Look, Gallois, you should take some rest now; in the future, I shall take care of your career.' So I went back home, and I told my wife that I had just met Louis XIV, and that my name was written down on his list."

In 1958 General De Gaulle came to power and transformed the budding *force de frappe* into "the weapon of the French nation," as Gallois put it, "having in mind that the effects of these weapons are so terrible, that you cannot share their use, and

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that only a nation may decide to use them. Using such a weapon as a last spasm; accepting to die standing straight, instead of dying laying down. It was really a last resort weapon. You cannot share such a weapon with another state."

The general died standing straight. His latest book—the last of a dozen—was published less than a year ago. His last major interview is less than six months old. His mind outlived his body.

Gallois was one of the most impressive men I have met. Back in 1993 I enjoyed his hospitality at his sprawling flat at No. 8, rue Rembrandt, just south of the Parc de Monceau. He was in his early 80's then, a dynamo of physical and mental energy dividing his time between an insane writing and speaking schedule and the painting of a five-story mural on the courtyard side of the building. It was an old love: Before joining the French air force in 1935 he had studied art and worked for a company that created lighted ads that hung on the Eiffel Tower. Speaking in a staccato English, he insisted that a true soldier has to be an artist at heart: "You need a vision, an image of what lies beyond, a sense of the greater reality."

His vision was shaped by the trauma of France's debacle of May 1940. Gallois fled from Algeria, where he was posted, to London, placed himself at De Gaulle's disposal, and joined the RAF. A decade after completing 30 bombing raids over Germany, as France's representative at SHAPE, he saw in the atomic bomb the only opportunity for his country to regain that great-power status that he knew was no longer rightfully hers on the basis of her economy, demography, or spirit.

The alternative was to accept France's fatal dependence on the United States—a "totalitarian democracy" devoid of any sense of its normal limits. He agreed with Sen. Pierre Biarnès that America was becoming "unbearable" in the imposition of her brand of quasimoral, mercantile hegemony on the rest of the world. He saw that the United States sought to *désouverainise* European nation-states. Germany went along with this "monstrosity," he told me, although it is not at all in Germany's interest, because "the flawed idea of 'one Europe' is an old obsession for the Germans." To push that dream, old nation-states have to be destroyed, which explains why the United States was so hell-bent on undermining Russia and Serbia. France should have responded by rebuilding links with "our traditional allies," Gallois believed, and his views on the Balkans could have come straight from the pages of *Chronicles*.

Disgusted by overt U.S. support of Croats and Muslims, Gallois wondered, in an article published in *Le Figaro* on September 30, 1993, "Should we return to the kind of political stability and territorial arrangements imposed by the Austro-Hungarians on one half of the Balkans and the Turks on the other half, with Germany, tomorrow, in place of the Dual Monarchy of yesterday, and the new Turkey as the latter-day Ottoman Empire?" His rhetoric was prescient: 17 years later, Croatia and Slovenia are firmly in the German orbit within an ugly caricature of "Europe," while neo-Ottomanism thrives east of the old Military Border.

Pierre-Marie Gallois was the last in a long line of European geopolitical thinkers—from Klausewitz and Jomini to Liddell Hart and Guderian—who combined superbly honed analytical skills with hands-on soldiering. He was also among the last to grasp that *certaine idée de l'Europe*, and to live by it.

—Srdja Trifkovic

Obiter Dicta

For 25 years each number of *Chronicles* has been introduced by the *Perspective*, in which the editor attempted to weave together the various themes of the issue into a coherent essay. Distracted by the need to address ever-changing topics, the editor has ended the series and initiated a new column, ***Beyond the Revolution***, in which he will explore the roots of the revolutions that have destroyed our civilization and point the way toward solutions that go beyond the increasingly irrelevant parameters of the dedicated left, which is forever advancing the next phase of revolution, and the ineffectual right, which is forever defending all the previous phases.

We are happy to report the return of **Srdja Trifkovic** as foreign-affairs editor. During this time of international unrest, of Islamic insurgence in the United States, of wars and rumors of war, his knowledge and experience will make *Chronicles* even more indispensable to intelligent readers.

With this issue we also bid a sad farewell to our assistant editor, **Nicole Kooistra**. Miss Kooistra will be pursuing her master's degree in English literature at Northern Illinois University.

Our poet this month is **Jennifer Reeser**, the author of two poetry collections published by Word Press. Her poems, essays, and translations of Russian and French literature appear in numerous anthologies and periodicals. She is the former assistant editor of *Iambs & Trochees* and lives in southern Louisiana.

Our cover photo is provided by our former art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett, who received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

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Children of the Revolution

WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION. Wherever we look, in the office or at church, whatever professions we examine or traditions we cherish, we are hard pressed to discover a single significant aspect of human experience that has not been transformed by a perpetual revolution that has inverted all the ancient truths and turned all institutions upside down and against the purposes they originally served. Military officers promote a social agenda that undermines the defense of the nation; clergymen preach a gospel concocted out of Marxism, feminism, and homosexualism; teachers spend their lives emptying their students' heads of anything true or useful; scholars and writers who should be seeking and sharing truth devote themselves to telling the Big Lie with a dedication that would have warmed the cockles of Dr. Goebbels' cold cold heart. The left has truly triumphed.

The left, in the technical sense, came into existence during the French Revolution, but the principles—or rather the attitudes—of the left were manifest centuries earlier, in the ironic moral subversion of Montaigne and Voltaire, in Descartes' rejection of tradition, in the sexual liberation and neopaganism of Renaissance Florence. Those towering geniuses of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment wrote the playbook for the revolutions that destroyed monarchy and aristocracy, subverted the Church, stripped away property rights and enervated free enterprise, and is finally, under the guise of saving the environment, working to reinvent or eliminate the human race.

In attempting to counter this Revolution, the right has, for the most, accomplished little or nothing. This is partly because the right always defines itself in relation to the latest phase of leftist revolution: It is right, as opposed to left, and conservative, as opposed to liberal or liberating. The most extreme term, *reactionary*, is also the most revealing. The left acts; the right reacts.

Counterrevolutionaries, who in principle oppose the Revolution, are no real exception. Like Brer Rabbit, they have embraced the tar baby of revolution and cannot let it go. This is because, like other conservatives, counterrevolutionaries are restorationists: Their goal is to restore the world of their childhood or their parents' childhood. In America this takes the comical form of Republicans who are convinced that the administration of President Eisenhower was American culture's palmiest day, but such nostalgia is only slightly more misplaced than the faith expressed by French counterrevolutionaries in the wisdom and justice of the Ancien Régime.

It is a truism, but worth repeating, that the foundation for the tyrannies of the Jacobin republic and its successors was laid by the French monarchy. From François I to Louis XIV, the kings of France and their advisors sought to concentrate power in the hands of the state by depriving their rivals—the provincial aristocracy and the Church—of their traditional authority and responsibilities. By 1700 Louis XIV had suppressed the provincial nobility, subdued the Church to the monarchy, and created a military establishment that made France the most admired and feared country in Europe.

His admirers probably thought the price for glory was small enough: ruinously unsuccessful wars with England, an enervated elite class, a top-heavy administrative bureaucracy whose officials worked more for their own interest than for the king's or the nation's. If France had been able to go through a period of creative dissolution, the Church and provinces might have experienced the resurgence that Burke seems to have envisioned when he pointed out to the French, "In your old states you . . . had all that combination and all that opposition of interests, you had that action and counteraction, which in the natural and in the political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers draws out the harmony of the universe."

Burke's Machiavellian insight—that liberty is the product not of peaceful simplicity but of complexity and conflict—was lost on the reactionaries. Devolution was hardly ever part of the counterrevolutionary agenda. For all the genuine richness and depth of the French right, they could never escape the revolution, which many of them mistakenly restricted to the Jacobins and their intellectual mentors. From Maistre to Maurras, the drums beat out the familiar tattoo: Greatness comes from national unity, the absolute and undivided power of the sovereign.

This weakness, which is perhaps only a strong tendency among French counterrevolutionaries—by far the deepest and most committed rightists of the past two centuries—has *a fortiori* been the rule for Anglo-American conservatives since the 20th century. Trapped in our na-

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ive revolutionary myths—the Glorious Revolution and the American Revolution—we cannot divest ourselves of the enemy's rhetoric. Abortion is opposed on the grounds of a right to life, and the right to possess guns is defended on entirely irrelevant constitutional grounds.

For the most part, American conservatives were delighted with the Supreme Court's decision to strike down a Chicago law banning the possession of handguns. No matter that the Second Amendment—like the First—was supposed to be applied not to the states but only to the federal government. Like adolescents, conservatives always want what they want when they want it. The same can be said for their howls of protests over a homosexual federal judge's ruling that there was no justification in nature or the Constitution for California's ban on same-sex "marriage." But these same conservatives thought they could use government to save the institution of marriage. In both cases, California and Chicago, conservatives based their arguments on the good they intended.

Yes, the conservatives grudgingly conceded, the Chicago law was justifiable under the original Constitution, but times had changed, and we have to fight on new ground—ground the enemy has chosen. Forgetting Napoleon's observation that he never lost a battle when he could choose the time and the place, conservatives have, over the long haul, lost every battle they have fought—or pretended to fight. In the Chicago case, what they advocate is to take jurisdiction away from states and local communities and invest it in the federal government; in California, the Christian conservatives think it is a good idea for the government of California to define what marriage is.

The underlying question is not what the Constitution says or how the Constitution can be manipulated: The Constitution of 1787 has been dead for 145 years, and even the reinvented nationalist Constitution, which lasted less than another century, is also a dead letter. No, the underlying question is how much power should be surrendered to an imperial government. Conservatives who argue, usually on the basis of natural rights or the principle of equality, that the government of the United States should have the power to promote educational standards, regulate firearms, protect marriage, and even define life are at best double agents who serve the Revolution.

The conservative embrace of big government is not simply a question of expanding budgets and responsibilities, but one of extent. The only way to limit the size and scope of government is to limit the range of its jurisdiction. A village can make do with town meetings, a powerless mayor, and a few part-time employees to write parking tickets and hand out dog licenses; a city of several million requires a large apparatus of cops and bureaucrats; an empire of 300 million, unless it is run on the decentralized lines of the early Roman Empire or 19th-century Switzerland, is inherently tyrannical.

American conservative politicians, from Goldwater to the Tea Party leaders, would insist that their primary goal is to limit the federal government to the modest dimensions envisioned by the Constitution of 1787, though few, if any, would endorse the arguments for the sovereignty of the states and their constitutional right to nullify federal laws that Jefferson proclaimed in the Kentucky Resolves. But what, in any practical way, have conservative politicians ever done except to increase the power and authority of the federal government?

Anyone who has observed American politics even in the limited period of a single lifetime should have noted that fewer and fewer rulers exercise control over more and more subjects. The concentration of political power has been facilitated by a parallel concentration of economic and social power. It is easy to control mass man when his character and opinions are formed by mass media. In our absolute state, in which the presidency is becoming a demagogic dictatorship, the presidents themselves are mere figureheads for the interests that put them in power. The people who control and administer that power number, probably, in the thousands.

The only political measures or movements that should be supported are those that devolve government away from Washington to state capitols, from state capitols to the governments of counties and cities, and from counties and cities to the real communities of villages and neighborhoods. Not only will good causes, such as a pro-life amendment to the Constitution, do more harm than good; they are inherently tyrannical. A politician with a cause wants to make himself a moral dictator. The proper political response to court-imposed abortion rights is not to increase the power of the federal government but to strip the federal courts of the powers that have been usurped by judges.

It is a vicious cycle: First the revolutionaries, in the name of suppressing the institutions of the old regime, arrogate more and more power for themselves; then the counter-revolutionaries, in opposing the Revolution, lay waste the already battered provinces, churches, and families, to build up their own tyranny of virtue. That is what conservatives mean by their convenient rhetorical defense, that they are being practical or dealing with political reality. With enemies like these, the devil needs no friends. ◆

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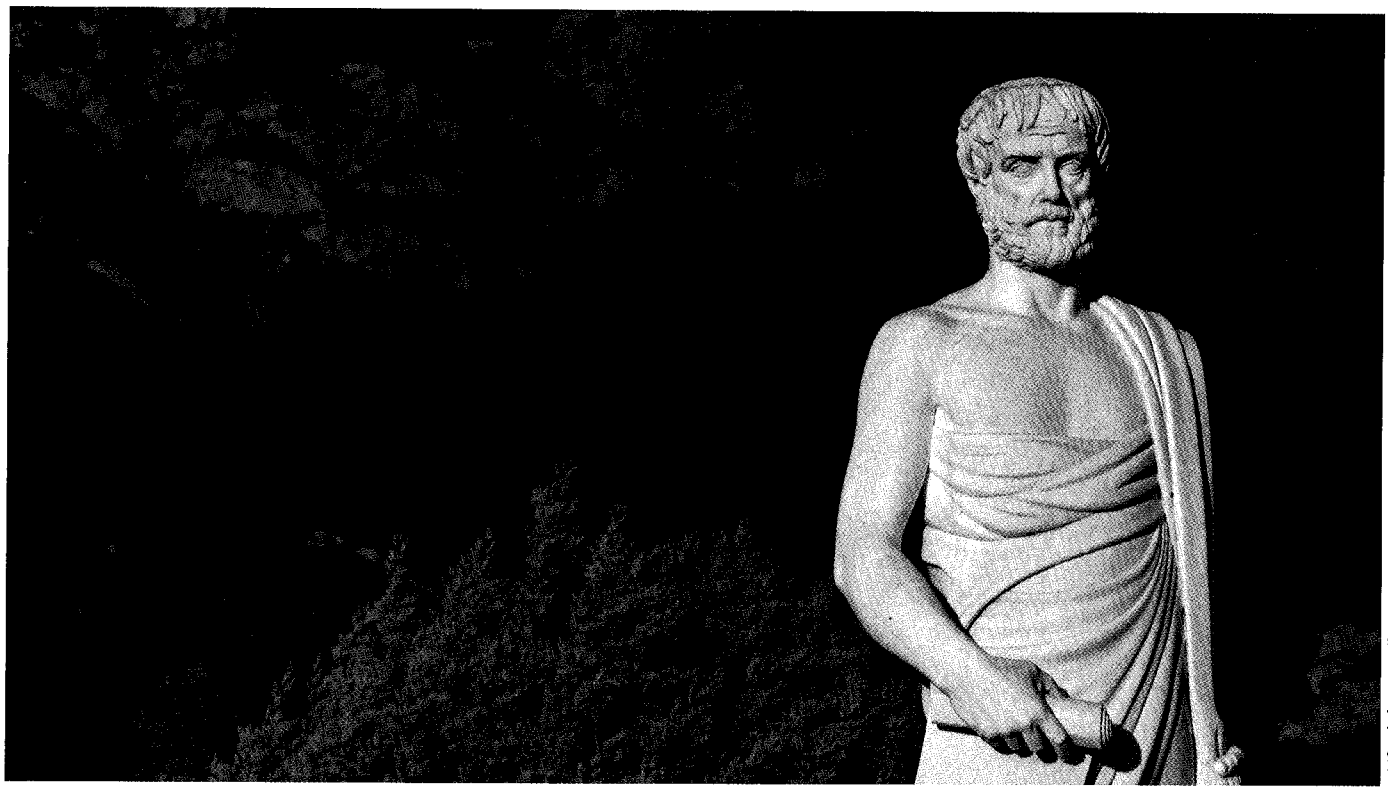

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Small Is Bountiful: The Secession Solution

by Kirkpatrick Sale

ARISTOTLE DECLARED that there is a limit to the size of states: "a limit, as there is to other things, plants, animals, implements; for none of these retain their natural power when they are too large or too small, but they either wholly lose their nature, or are spoiled." But really, what did he know? He lived at a time when the entire population of the world was somewhere around 50 million—about the size of England today. The total population of the separate Greek-speaking city states may have been eight million, and Athens, where he lived, considered a large city, would have been under 100,000 people. Limits? He couldn't even imagine a world (ours) of 6.8 billion, a nation (China) of 1.3 billion, or a city (Tokyo) of 36 million. How is he going to help us?

He, at least, knew that there are limits:

> Experience shows that a very populous city can rarely, if ever, be well governed; since all cities which have a reputation for good government have a limit of population. We may argue on grounds of reason, and the same result will follow: for law is order, and good law is good order; but a very great multitude cannot be orderly.

It doesn't matter if that city is 1 million or 36 million—political entities at such sizes could certainly not be democratic in any sense, could not possibly function with anything approaching efficiency, and could exist only with great inequities of wealth and material comfort.

Aristotle also knew that human beings are of a certain limited size of brain and comprehension, and that putting them in the aggregate does not make them any smarter—or as another philosopher, Lemuel Gulliver, once said, "Reason does not extend itself with the bulk of the body." There is a human scale to human politics, defined by human nature, that functions well only in such assemblages as do not overstress and overburden the quite capable and ingenious but limited human brain and human capacity.

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So political units, Aristotle said—he thought mostly in terms of cities—have to be limited: limited by human nature and human experience. And it is with that understanding that we now may start contemplating what in today's world would constitute the ideal, or optimum, size of a state, with these two overriding criteria: "sufficient," in Aristotle's words, "for a good life in the political community" (*i.e.*, some form of democracy) and "the largest number which suffices for the purposes of a good life"—in a word, efficiency.

This is not some sort of idle philosopher's quest but the foundation of a serious reordering of our political world, and a reordering such as the process of secession—indeed, only the process of secession—could provide. We have abundant evidence that a state as large as 305 million people is ungovernable. One scholar recently said that we are in the fourth decade of Congress's inability to pass a single measure of social consequence. Bloated and corrupted beyond its ability to address any of the problems it has created as an empire, it is a blatant failure. So what could replace it, and at what size? The answer is the independent states of America.

Let us start by looking at real-world figures of modern nations to give us some clue as to population sizes that actually work.

Of all the world's political entities—there are 223 of them, counting the smallest independent islands—45 are below 250,000 people, 67 below 1 million, 108 below 5 million. In fact, 50 percent of nations are below 5.5 million, and a full 58 percent are smaller than Switzerland's population of 7.7 million. Put plainly, most countries function with relatively small populations. And looking at the nations that are recognized models of statecraft, eight are even below 500,000—Luxemburg, Malta, Iceland, Barbados, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, and San Marino. The example of Iceland, a beacon of democracy (banking troubles aside) with the world's oldest parliament, suggests that 319,000 people is all you would need.

Admittedly, gross domestic product is a crude and entirely uncritical measure of economic worth, and reflects all kinds of growth, much of it undesirable, but it is, for now, the best way to gauge economic performance. Eighteen of the top 20 nations ranked by *per capita* GDP (a total of 27 countries because of ties) are small, under five million, and all but one of the top ten are under five million. The exception is the United States (number ten), with the others being Liechtenstein, Qatar, Luxembourg, Bermuda, Norway, Kuwait, Jersey, Singapore, and Brunei, in that order. The average size of those nine is 1.9 million. The average size of all 27 of the top economic nations, excluding the United States, is 5.1 million.

You are beginning to get the picture.

Another measure is freedom, as reckoned by three different organizations—Freedom House, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Economist*—using measures of civil liberties, open elections, free media, and the like. Of the 14 states reckoned freest in the world, 9 of them have populations below Switzerland at 7.7 million, 11 below Sweden at 9.3 million, and the only sizable states are Canada, the United Kingdom, and Germany (the largest, at 81 million).

There is one other measure of freedom that is put out by Freedom House, ranking all the nations of the world according to political rights and civil liberties, and there are only 46 countries with perfect scores. Of those 46, the majority of them are under five million in population, and indeed 17 of them are even under one million. That is rather astonishing in itself. And only 14 of the 46 free nations are over 7.5 million. Excluding the United States, whose reputation for freedom is belied by her incarceration of 2.3 million people (25 percent of the world's prisoners), and excluding the United Kingdom, Spain, and Poland, the average population of the free states of the world is approximately 5 million.

There are several other national rankings. Literacy: Of the 44 countries that claim a literacy rate of 99 or better (I say claim, since it is hard to verify), only 15 are large, while 29 are below 7.5 million. Health: Measured by the World Health Organization, 12 of the top 20 are under 7 million, and none are over 65 million. In a ranking of happiness and standard of living last year by sociologist Steven Hales, the top countries were Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Netherlands, Australia, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Canada, Ireland, Denmark, Austria, and Finland; all but Canada and Australia are small. And a "sustainable society index" created by two scholars earlier last year, adding in environmental and ecological factors, ranks only smaller countries in the top ten—Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Austria, Iceland, Vietnam, Georgia, New Zealand, and Latvia.

Enough of that. The point, I trust, is well and simply made. A nation not only can be viable and sustainable at quite small population sizes, a model of relatively democratic and efficient government, but in fact can provide all the necessary qualities for superior living. Indeed, the figures seem to suggest that, though it is certainly possible to thrive at populations under a million people, there is an optimum size for a successful state, somewhere in the range of

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three to five million people.

A great many countries are surprisingly small—underlining the point, often missed by critics of secession, that a nation does not have to be self-sufficient to operate well in the modern world. In fact there are 85 countries out of the 223 counted by the United Nations that are under 10,000 square miles—that is to say, the size of Vermont or smaller—and they include Israel, El Salvador, the Bahamas, Qatar, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Singapore, and Andorra.

And if we go back to that measure of economic strength, *per capita* GDP, small countries prove to be decidedly advantageous. Of the top-20 ranked nations (27 in all, including ties), all but 8 are small in area, under 35,000 square miles, the global median (the size of South Carolina), and 2 of those 8 include Norway and Sweden, technically large but effectively small (excluding their empty northern areas). In other words, 77 percent of the most prosperous countries are small. And most of them are quite small indeed, under 10,000 square miles: Liechtenstein, Qatar, Luxembourg, Bermuda, Kuwait, Jersey, Singapore, Brunei, Guernsey, Cayman Islands, Hong Kong, Andorra, San Marino, British Virgin Islands, and Gibraltar.

All this is proof positive that economically successful nations needn't be large in geographic size. In fact, it is strongly suggestive that large size may be a hindrance. The reason for this is that administrative, distribution, transportation, and similar transaction costs obviously have to rise, perhaps exponentially, as geographic size increases. Control and communication also become more difficult to manage over long distances, often to the point where central authority and governance become nearly impossible. As all the lines and signals become more complex, the ability to manage efficiently is severely diminished.

Small is not only beautiful but bountiful.

Once that important idea is understood, a further observation ensues: In many cases a smallish country might find it desirable to divide up even further so as to take advantage of smaller areas for more efficient economic functions. This might be outright secession in some places, where it would simply be good economic sense, if not political and cultural good sense. But it might also take the form of economic and political devolution, giving smaller areas autonomy and power without outright secession, after the Swiss model.

I propose that, out of these figures and even more so out of the history of the world, there is a Law of Government Size, and it goes like this: Economic and social misery increases in direct proportion to the size and power of the central government of a nation.

In testing Sale's Law, as I like to think of it, let's begin with Arnold Toynbee's classic study of human civilization, whose primary conclusion is that the next-to-last stage of any society, before collapse, is "its forcible political unification in a centralized state," as witness the Roman Empire, and the Ottoman, Bengal, and Mongol empires, as well as the Tokugawa Shogunate, and ultimately the Spanish, British, French, and Portuguese empires. The consolidation of nations into powerful empires leads not to shining periods of peace and prosperity and the advance of human betterment, but to increasing restriction, warfare, autocracy, crowding, immiseration, inequality, poverty, and starvation.

THE REASON FOR ALL THIS is not mysterious. As a government grows, it expands both its bureaucratic might over domestic affairs and its military might over external ones. Money must be found for this expansion, and it comes either from taxation, which leads to higher prices and ultimately inflation, or from printing new money, which also leads to higher prices and inflation. Increased wealth is also thought to result from conquest and colonization, enlarging spoils through warfare, but it comes at the price of imposing increased government control and military conscription at home, and increased violence, bloodshed, and misery for one's own army and civilians and opposing forces abroad. Ultimately, the result is economic and social misery.

There have been four major periods of great state consolidation and enlargement in the last thousand years. The first (1150 to 1300) came with the establishment of royal dynasties, which replaced medieval baronies and city-states in England, Aquitaine, Sicily, Aragon, and Castile. This resulted in rampant inflation of nearly 400 percent and almost incessant wars, with increasing battle casualties from a few hundred to more than a million.

The second (1525 to 1650) involved the consolidation of national power through standing armies, royal taxation, central banks, civilian bureaucracies, and established state religions. Inflation rose to more than 700 percent in just 125 years. There was also an unprecedented expansion of wars, a war intensity seven times greater than anything Europe had seen before, with casualties increasing to as many as eight million, perhaps five million in the Thirty Years War alone.

Third, from 1775 to 1815, the period of modern state government in most of Europe, including national police forces, conscripted armies, and centralized state power *à la* the Napoleonic Code, inflation rose over 250 percent in just 40 years, and war casualties amounted to 15 million (perhaps 5 million during the Napoleonic Wars).

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Finally, from 1910 to 1970, all European states consolidated and expanded power, resulting in the worst depression in history and inflation of 1,400 percent, not to mention the two most ruinous wars in all human history, which contributed to casualties, mostly deaths, of 100 million or more.

The larger the state, the more economic disaster and military casualties. Hence, the Law of Government Size.

How does all of this apply to the United States today?

Of the 50 states, 29 have populations below five million people. Half of the population lives in 40 states that average out to 3.7 million people; the other half is in the 10 largest states. There are ten states and one colony in the three to five million population class that would be ideal secession candidates: Iowa, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Kentucky, Louisiana, South Carolina, Alabama, Colorado, and Mississippi. And there are another 13 with populations between one and three million—Montana, Rhode Island, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Maine, Idaho, Nebraska, West Virginia, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Kansas, and Arkansas—and another eight below one million but larger than Iceland, including Vermont. In other words, 30 of the states (plus Puerto Rico) fall in a range where similar sizes in the rest of the world have produced successful independent nations.

Again, 84 political areas in the world are smaller than Vermont, the second smallest U.S. state. The median area of U.S. states is roughly 58,000 square miles—25 states are smaller than that, and 25 bigger. If all of those under 58,000 were independent, they would match 79 other countries in the world—among them Greece, Nicaragua, Iceland, Hungary, Portugal, Austria, Czech Republic, Ireland, Sri Lanka, Denmark, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Taiwan.

The argument for secession need not focus exclusively on population or geographic size—one might factor in cultural cohesion, developed infrastructure, historical identity—but that seems to me to be the sensible place to start when considering viable states. And since the experience of the world has shown that populations ranging from three to five million are optimal for governance and efficiency, that is as good a measure as any to begin assessing bodies for their secessionist potential and their chances of success as independent states.

The only hope for reenergizing American politics is to create truly sovereign states through peaceful, popular, powerful secession.

Kirkpatrick Sale is director of the Middlebury Institute and the author of Human Scale.

from Sonnets From the Dark Lady

by Jennifer Reeser

10.

"Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy Will . . . "
—William Shakespeare, Sonnet 136

Existent in the *will* of comprehension,
Upheld by both the foresight and the hind,
Are bounds and bonds about which future tension,
Admitting love with distance, holds in mind.
If I *will* hold you, I will hold you, seeing
Or blind, or—best—peripherally skilled:
That most appropriate outlook of being
For one en-bonded to the richer-willed.
Come nearer, clearer conscience loses sight.
Remain away, and vision cannot see,
Yet to see and hold too closely will invite
A will of window-wishing not to be.
Withhold, bequeath, cry *bankrupt*, owe or bill;
You hold that ruby title which is will.

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Secession and American Republicanism

by Donald W. Livingston

When the American colonists seceded from Britain in 1776, Europe was shared out among great monarchies. Only Switzerland was republican, but Americans were determined to enjoy a republican style of government in the New World. The republican tradition went back over 2,000 years to the ancient Greeks and consistently taught that a republic must satisfy three conditions. Self-government: The citizens should make the legislation they live under. The rule of law: Legislation should be made in accord with a more fundamental law known to all citizens through custom or natural reason. Human scale: The republic should be small.

Most of us would accept the first two conditions but not the third. We talk of the French and American republics, and of the People's Republic of China, as if size no longer mattered. But for over two millennia the most brilliant ancient, medieval, and modern republics rarely had populations over 200,000, and most were considerably below that. Ancient Athens, one of the largest Greek republics, had around 160,000. When a larger sphere of politics was needed—*e.g.*, for defense or ease of trade—the remedy was a federation of small republics, as with the Swiss federation.

The vast territory Americans acquired after independence seemed to doom them to a centralized monarchy, whether they wanted it or not. This was not perceived as a problem at first because, with the exception of regulating trade, the crown had left the colonists pretty much to themselves. David Hume could write in Scotland in the 1730's that "the Charter governments in America are almost entirely independent of England." Although the territory was vast, the population was sparse. Being made up of small, rural Protestant communities, Americans enjoyed a republican style of politics on a scale smaller than that of the ancient Greeks. The largest city was Philadelphia, with around 30,000 people. New York did not reach the size of ancient Athens until around 1830.

As the territory filled with population, Americans confronted the problem of republicanism and size. The so-

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lution was division and secession. Part of Virginia seceded and formed the state of Kentucky. Western counties seceded from North Carolina to form the state of Franklin. That movement failed, but out of it came the state of Tennessee. Maine seceded from Massachusetts. The Republic of West Florida seceded from the Louisiana Purchase territory, but was annexed by the United States in 1810. Nevertheless, this act of secession was burned into the memory of the southwestern people. The flag of the West Florida Republic was a single white star on a blue ground. When Texas seceded from Mexico it used that flag as the canton of its national flag, and named itself the "lone star Republic." In 1861, as Southern states joyfully seceded to form a federation of their own, a song was written in tribute to the Republic of West Florida's "bonnie blue flag that bears a single star." After "Dixie," "The Bonnie Blue Flag" was the most popular song of the Confederacy. That ensign is still flown in the South.

SECESSION was not the only way of preserving republicanism in a vast territory; a state could also cede part of its territory. Virginia had conquered a vast stretch of territory in the northwest that included the present states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Virginia statesmen argued that Virginia could not both be a republic and rule such vast territory. Consequently, the territory was ceded to the Confederation as common territory from which new states could be formed.

But Jefferson thought Virginia was still too large for republican government. He proposed dividing it into "ward republics." Unlike counties, which are mere administrative units of state legislatures, these would be small republics with considerable self-rule over local affairs. Jefferson modeled them on the New England towns that, at the time, had not been consolidated into state governments. These little republics nullified the embargoes of Jefferson and Madison, military conscription, and the War of 1812. Jefferson deplored their "selfish" policies but admired their spirit, and said later that he felt his administration "tremble" under the remonstrances of the New England towns.

Republicanism was preserved in the vast territory of early America by an ethic of secession and division. Had America remained within the territory of the original 13 states, she could have developed, through repeated secessions, into 50 states as we have today. And if Jefferson had his way, each of these would be divided into small republics similar to the Swiss cantons.

But that was not the path taken. The temptation to monarchy was greatly strengthened by the Louisiana Purchase, which more than doubled the size of the Union. This unexpected threat of monarchy prompted the first secession movement. Leaders in New England and New York argued that the purchase was unconstitutional and part of a conspiracy by Virginia and the South to dominate the Union. Virginia, they said, wanted to become "the Austria of America."

The move to divide the Union in the direction of a republican scale can only come from the states. As sovereign parties to the constitutional compact, they must assume again what Madison called the "duty" to protect their citizens from unconstitutional acts of the central government.

Jefferson's response was that America would certainly become an empire, but not a centralized empire. She should become what he called "an empire of liberty." As Americans moved west, they would reenact the primal scene of the American colonists. They would clear forests, build communities, and, when developed enough to govern themselves, form states and secede from the mother union as the colonists had seceded from the mother country. This process, if carried out to the Pacific, could yield two, three, or more unions of states on the continent. In a letter to Joseph Priestly on January 29, 1804, Jefferson said he would be happy to have a Mississippi Confederacy alongside the old Atlantic Confederacy and suggested that other confederacies might be formed on the Pacific coast. Each would contain "Free and independent Americans, unconnected with us but by ties of blood and interest, and employing like us the rights of self-government." This was a common outlook among Jeffersonians. There was no danger that Jefferson's "empire of liberty" would become too large for the purposes of self-government, because if it did, there was a remedy in secession. He wrote in 1816, "If any state in the Union will declare that it prefers separation . . . to a continuance in union . . . I have no hesitation in say-

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ing, 'let us separate.'"

Fifty years after the Louisiana Purchase, the United States would acquire large parts of Mexico and the Oregon Territory. Without the exercise of secession and division, a regime of this monster size would collapse into a centralized monarchy. From 1804 to 1860, there was a zero-sum battle over who would control the center and dominate the Union.

The states must begin to recall the constitutional powers they have allowed to slip away. They must once again take on the role of defining and enforcing the Constitution through acts of state interposition and nullification designed to reach concurrence with the other states.

This battle for domination was aided by a nationalist theory of the Constitution put forth by Joseph Story and Daniel Webster, and established with fire and sword by Abraham Lincoln. Sovereignty, they said, was vested in the American people in the aggregate, not in the people of the several states. Upon seceding from Britain, the colonists descended into what Hobbes and Locke called "a state of nature," or anarchy. This aggregate, through revolutionary action, formed a political society whose will was represented by the Continental Congress. This Congress authorized the formation of states. It was this preposterous theory that Lincoln faithfully followed in his First Inaugural when he said that the Union is older than the states and, in fact, created them as states.

But the theory was moribund from the beginning. Locke and Hobbes taught that a state of nature does not exist if there is a legislature. The colonial legislatures never ceased to exist and simply transformed themselves into the legislatures of independent states. They were recognized by name as sovereign states in treaties with Britain, France, Holland, and Sweden. Article II of the Articles of Confederation says that "each State retains its freedom, sovereignty, and independence." A state cannot "retain" sovereignty unless it has it, and in joining the Union, no state renounced sovereignty. What motivates the nationalist theory is not an honest look at the historical founding of America, but political ambition legitimated by the philosophical theory of the modern unitary state. This ambition appears forcefully in Hamilton, who argued at the Philadelphia Convention for a president for life, a senate with members for life appointed by the president, and state governors appointed by the president—in other words, monarchy under another name.

Lincoln inherited this nationalist ambition. The states, he said, were not sovereign political societies and could neither nullify nor secede. He compared them to counties in a unitary state: "What is this particular sacredness of a State? . . . If a state, in one instance, and a county in another, should be equal in extent of territory, and equal in number of people, wherein is that State better than a county." For Lincoln, as for all devotees of the modern unitary state, there is only a central authority having a monopoly on coercion over individuals in a territory. The French Revolution was the first to try wiping the slate clean of independent social authorities. The French state, for example, does not recognize ancient Corsica as a political society, but only as an administrative unit of central authority ruling individuals.

In describing the states as counties, Lincoln took his bearings not from the American Revolution but from the French. The French and the American state are both described today as "indivisible" republics, which means that secession is absolutely prohibited. But to rule out secession in a regime the size of the United States or France is to sever the ancient teaching of the republican tradition that size and scale are internally connected to self-government and the rule of law. But is that true? How does a post-Lincolnian America of continental scale, "one and indivisible," measure in terms of self-government and rule of law?

Congress is composed of 435 representatives and 100 senators. A lawmaking majority, including the president, is only 269 people. (And if Congress acts by a quorum, which it often does, the majority is only 135!) This small body rules 309 million people and commands a budget of $3.55 trillion, plus the inevitable deficit that brings it close to $5 trillion. The ratio of representatives to population in the House is 1 for every 710,345 people—an absurd ratio for the claim of self-government. The first Congress had 1 representative for every 60,000 people (or 10,000 voting citizens), a ratio Madison thought inadequate for a country of nearly 4 million. But if this—in his view—inadequate ratio were applied today, there would be more than 5,000 mem-

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bers of the House. Much too large for a lawmaking body. But does that mean that Madison's ratio is wrong or that the Union has become too large for the purposes of self-government?

Judging from the size of legislative bodies around the world, 435 is about the right size. When the population reaches 435 million, there will be one representative for every million persons. But if the current size of the House cannot be increased as population expands, then we have reached the point at which all pretense to self-government must be abandoned.

The out-of-scale ratio of representation could perhaps be tolerated if the central government were to stay within the bounds of its enumerated powers—mainly regulation of commerce, defense, and foreign treaties. When Nancy Pelosi was asked where the Constitution grants Congress power to compel individuals to buy health insurance, she simply laughed. Congress and the imperial presidency can pretty much define the limits of their powers with little fear of being policed by the Supreme Court—which is just another federal agency. Its main use of judicial review (a power nowhere granted in the Constitution) is to declare state actions unconstitutional. It has invaded the police powers of the states to regulate education, morals, religion, abortion, speech, health, voting rights, law enforcement, marriage—matters at the heart of republican life. By votes of five to four, unelected judges can act as social engineers on an aggregate of 309 million people.

The remedy? Recover the practice of pre-Lincolnian America, where republicanism, nullification, and secession went hand in hand with a regime of continental scale. With this ethic, the states kept the central government in check. As of 1860, it was virtually out of debt and imposed no inland taxes. It lived off land sales and a tariff on imports. Today, the federal debt is over $13 trillion. In addition, the United States has commitments (Medicare, Social Security, *etc.*) estimated by some experts at $100 trillion. And still more spending programs are created.

The states must begin to recall the constitutional powers they have allowed to slip away. They must once again take on the role of defining and enforcing the Constitution through acts of state interposition and nullification designed to reach concurrence with the other states. And if it is said that a Union of 50 states is too large and unwieldy for that kind of politics, then the proper response would be to divide the Union into regional federations where the people have more control over the legislation that governs them and the fundamental law to which legislation must conform.

If the United States were divided into five unions—the North, Midwest, Southwest, Pacific Northwest, and South—each would have a GDP larger than that of Britain or France. The South, if Oklahoma were included, would have the second largest in the world, after Japan. Even if all had the original Constitution, they would soon evolve into different political societies. The 11 American states that seceded in 1861 retained the Constitution of 1789 with only a few (but very significant) reforms that were designed largely to prevent runaway centralization. In one of these, the amendment process originates in the states. Any three states could propose an amendment to the Confederate Constitution, and only two thirds were needed for ratification; whereas in the U.S. Constitution, amendments begin in Congress and require three fourths of the states for ratification, unless a full two thirds of the states "call a Convention for proposing Amendments." Since 1790 over 10,000 amendments have been proposed, but only 30 have left the congressional gate, and 27 have passed.

This salutary republican reform in the Confederate Constitution could not have been enacted in the United States in 1861. The nationalists would have blocked it. But it could be enacted in a regional federation of 11 states where the American republican tradition was stronger. Likewise, the Canadian federation has ten provinces in a federation of 34 million (smaller than California). Its constitution allows a province to secede, and it even enshrines nullification by allowing a province to opt out of federal laws pertaining to civil rights. Again, size matters. Smaller regional federations of ten or so states make consensus on a substantial constitutional reform more likely. Constitutional reform in the United States will likely await a division of the Union in the direction of smaller regional federations.

The move to divide the Union in the direction of a republican scale can only come from the states. As sovereign parties to the constitutional compact, they must assume again what Madison called the "duty" to protect their citizens from unconstitutional acts of the central government. This can be done only by prudential interposition and nullification—and by reviving the discourse of secession and division—not as the lawless, revolutionary act that post-Lincolnian nationalists view it to be, but as a necessary and lawful constituent of the republican tradition mapped to a continental scale.

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You Call This a Financial Reform Law?

by William J. Quirk

THE SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL for TARP (the Troubled Asset Relief Program) reported on July 21 that the bank bailout that has been going on since September 2008 has cost $3.7 trillion in actual expenditures and guarantees to the banks. Not surprisingly, the banks are prospering. But in a just world, the failed banks would have been shut.

Of course, the impact of the financial crisis goes far beyond that—wiping out jobs, wealth, and optimism. *The Economist* calls it America's "sharpest trauma since the second world war." Yet no one has been held accountable.

On July 21, President Obama signed the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. "Because of this law," he declared, "the American people will never again be asked to foot the bill for Wall Street's mistakes. There will be no more taxpayer funded bailouts. Period." Obama praised the work of the broadly smiling Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), then led a long applause.

Everyone knows that, if Goldman Sachs fails tomorrow, the government will bail it out. In fact, the financial-reform law does not seriously address the issues raised by the Crisis of 2008. Rather than diminishing the big banks' power, the new law enhances it, institutionalizing Too Big To Fail. TBTF, the heart of the current crisis, allows the big banks, because of the implicit government guarantee, to borrow at lower rates than smaller banks. The funding of the TBTF banks is consequently subsidized by the taxpayers. Moral hazard—heads, the banks win; tails, the taxpayer loses—will continue unabated. By selling mortgage-backed securities, the banks financed the subprime market long after it was clear the loans were made to people who couldn't afford to pay them back.

Wall Street's culture of greed and wretched excess exploded in 2008, hurting almost everyone in the country. The financial sector had ballooned far beyond its economic and social utility by funding speculation and gambling in place of long-term projects. The new law should have created legal structures to deal with Wall Street's culture. The Glass-Steagall Act did that in 1933—it directly attacked the quick-buck culture that caused the 1929 crash and the Great Depression. Ferdinand Pecora, who directed the Senate's 1933 year-long investigation of banking practices, wrote of the "riotous speculative excesses of the wild bull market of 1929." Glass-Steagall's solution was to separate commercial banking from investment banking. In 1939, Pecora wrote that the public "is sometimes forgetful" and may need to be "reminded what Wall Street was like before Uncle Sam stationed a policeman at its corner, lest, in time to come, some attempt be made to abolish that post." Glass-Steagall held the line until 1999, when the Clinton administration fired the policeman.

Glass-Steagall divided the banking functions because they represented different cultures. Commercial banking performed the essential social and economic purpose of allocating scarce capital for long-term investment. Investment banking performed useful economic functions by underwriting new issues of stocks and bonds, but its other activities looked to the short term. Glass-Steagall said that short-term speculative, irrational exuberance will always lead to boom and bust, so it should be segregated from the essential banking functions. The investment bankers could gamble and lose their money if they wanted, but they were on their own. The essential banking functions were supported by the government *via* deposit insurance and the ability to borrow from the Federal Reserve. Glass-Steagall built a legal wall between the two cultures. Additionally, in the 1990's the investment banks converted to the corporate form where the shareholders had limited liability and the officers had none. The bank officers could then make risky bets with other people's money, taking the profits for themselves while leaving the losses to the shareholders and taxpayers.

In 2000, Washington legalized derivatives, which became the bankers' favorite new toy. Derivatives, which are based on futures contracts invented in 18th-century England to protect the price of corn for farmers, turned the banks into casinos. They are a device to permit betting on stocks, bonds, commodities, and such invented things as volatility. (There is, if you can believe it, a CBOE Volatility Index.) In the second quarter of 2010, Goldman Sachs lost hundreds of millions shorting volatility, proving that even the vampire squid can make a mistake. Wall Street's appetite for gambling turned out to be insatiable. Currently, the banks' bets with one another through derivatives have a face amount of $600 trillion—ten times the world's economic output. They also tie the banks together, creating one great big TBTF. Derivatives are private contracts between two parties, and their terms and even existence are

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unknown to competitors or regulators. Normally, a collapsed bubble in one part of the economy does not bring the house down. Derivatives, however, turned the subprime-mortgage collapse into a system-wide failure.

When Congress legalized derivatives, and the banks definitively turned into casinos, all federal backups should have been unequivocally removed. The banks were no longer serving the public and were no longer entitled to any subsidy. But the bankers kept the explicit and implicit federal supports. That political failure has cost the taxpayers $3.7 trillion and counting. From 2000 to 2008, the financial system paid salaries never seen before in human history. Annual salaries of over $100 million became common; in 2009 the average salary for all Goldman employees, including secretaries and runners, was $700,000.

Both the Bush and the Obama administrations put the very people who had wrecked the system—Larry Summers, Tim Geithner, and Ben Bernanke—in charge of fixing it. Not surprisingly, they decided to bail out the casinos. Similarly, the legislative designers of the Dodd-Frank Act were the same people who had protected Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac as they packaged and sold worthless mortgages.

The new law authorizes the Fed and the Treasury to bail out the big banks without congressional approval and with minimal judicial review. Congress, of course, passed TARP, but most of the bailout had no statutory authority—it was illegal. For example, there was no statutory authority for the Treasury's trillion-dollar guarantee of money-market funds. The new law legalizes the previously illegal parts of the bailout.

"No financial firm will be 'too big to fail,'" says Chris Dodd, because the law provides a "predictable, orderly, and safe process for shutting down dangerous Wall Street firms . . . without endangering the entire economy." The senator assured us that "middle-class families on Main Street won't have to pay a penny." Part II of the act is entitled "Orderly Liquidation Authority"; it provides that the Fed, FDIC, and Treasury can put any "financial company" into receivership if they find it to be a threat to the system. The FDIC can then dispose of its assets as it does now with banks. The courts must find the Fed, FDIC, and Treasury acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner before they can set aside the receivership.

The problem with this approach is that, because of derivatives, all of the banks are interdependent, so the system fails as a whole. The new law only requires the clearing of whatever derivatives the CFTC or SEC determines should be cleared. All others will remain private contracts whose existence is known only to the parties.

The bankers tell us they have to be big to compete with international banks, some of which are state owned. Prof. Simon Johnson of MIT, a former economic counselor and director of the research department at the International Monetary Fund, writes, "There is simply no evidence—and I mean absolutely none—that society gains from banks having a balance sheet larger than $100 billion." Johnson further noted that "capping the size of our largest banks at one-fifth or one-tenth of their current level could not strangle credit." In October 2009, former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan said that breaking up TBTF banks may in fact result in a net economic benefit: "If they're too big to fail, they're too big . . . In 1911 we broke up Standard Oil—so what happened? The individual parts became more valuable than the whole. Maybe that's what we need to do."

The synthetic Collateralized Debt Obligation (CDO) is one of the more bizarre of recent inventions. It owns no assets, yet it refers to them; it is pure gambling. This financial "innovation" was designed to allow short bets on mortgage-backed securities. You can short IBM by borrowing a share and selling it. You replace it by buying another, preferably after the price has dropped. That couldn't be done with debt-backed securities because they were all different. The use of the synthetic CDOs greatly multiplied losses when the bubble burst. John Kenneth Galbraith, in *The Great Crash of 1929* (1954), writes, "Such is the genius of capitalism that where a real demand exists it does not go long unfilled. In all great speculative orgies devices have appeared to enable the speculator so to concentrate on his business." The synthetics should be banned, but Dodd-Frank lets them live.

Glass-Steagall was 37 pages long; the current Dodd-Frank Act goes on for 2,319 pages. Senator Dodd says, "no one will know how the new law will work until it's passed and we see the regulations." The *Wall Street Journal* reported (July 14) that the new law will "unleash the biggest wave of new federal financial rule-making in three generations." It will require "no fewer than 243 new formal rule-makings by 11 different federal agencies." Regulation, of course, is what failed last time. The Fed had their people in the banks watching every day as the banks turned into casinos. Congress, by punting to regulatory agencies, is abnegating its constitutional obligation.

Dodd-Frank's emphasis on delegating legislative authority to the SEC, the Fed, the FDIC, the Treasury, and seven other agencies is another gift to the big banks. The big banks can afford high-priced lobbyists and will use the regulatory process to benefit themselves and hurt the

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smaller banks. Consequently, Dodd-Frank ensures that the institutions that caused the crisis will do it again. Michael Lewis, author of *The Big Short*, insists, "To put it in the crudest possible way, these firms have to be smaller and less profitable."

The new law ended up close to what the Obama administration originally proposed. The more substantial restrictions on the banks were all stripped in the last week of debate. The Volcker rule would have prohibited proprietary trading—banks trading for their own account—but exceptions were added that were broad enough that banks can continue to do what they are doing. The rule, as enacted, says, in effect, *You can't do what you're not doing now anyway*. Similarly, the effort to bring the shadow world of derivatives into the sunshine was beaten back. Earlier versions of the act required that they be traded on exchanges, which would have subjected them, and their pricing, to public scrutiny. But with the bill that was signed, they will continue to be the casino's favorite betting vehicle. When the market crashed in 2008, nobody knew who owed what to whom. Banks stopped dealing with one another because they didn't know who held bad bets that would bust them. The other problem was that the synthetic CDOs and mortgage-backed securities were so strange that they could not be accurately valued by the Fed. Since the bank's assets and liabilities could not be reliably ascertained, the Fed did not know if a bank was bust or not.

The financial crisis has hurt almost all Americans. The true unemployment rate, according to *Investor's Business Daily* (IBD), is 24.1 percent—very close to the Great Depression's 25-percent rate. (IBD counts the underemployed and those too discouraged to be looking actively.) The civilian labor force is 153.7 million—the Labor Department reports 14.6 million as unemployed to arrive at its 9.5 percent rate, while IBD reports 37 million as jobless. We expect one million home foreclosures this year, up from 900,000 last year. The Obama administration argues—as did the Bush administration—that the country was hurtling toward another great depression, but the bailout pulled us "back from the brink." Things would be much worse, they say, if they had not intervened. The question is, has the depression been canceled or just postponed? The Fed's continuation of its zero-interest-rate loan program to the banks reflects a continued concern that we remain in close proximity to the brink.

What about those enormous Wall Street bonuses that preceded the recent crash? Well, the bonuses for 2009 and 2010 are back to 2007 levels. The federal pay czar reported on July 23 that 80 percent of the Wall Street bonuses he studied were unmerited. U.K. Chancellor of the Exchequer Alastair Darling announced, in December 2009, a new bank-bonus tax. The tax is imposed on discretionary bonuses above £25,000. The tax rate is 50 percent and is nondeductible. In the second quarter of this year Goldman Sachs paid $600 million in the U.K. bonus tax. Such a tax seems a modest response to the obscene bonuses, but our Congress did not even consider it.

The public's view of the government's economic policies since 2008 is negative. A Pew Research poll taken July 15-18 reports that most Americans believe these policies have helped big banks, large corporations, and the wealthy while providing little or no help for the poor, middle class, or small businesses. Fully 74 percent say the policies have helped the big banks, while only 23 percent believe they have helped small business.

Both the annual deficits and the national debt have risen to dramatic new heights. Almost all have been hurt except the individuals and institutions that caused the trouble. Americans are furious about the bailouts—75 percent of the public has opposed them from the beginning. Congress, nonetheless, passed the Bush administration's TARP in September 2008 after first defeating it. TARP, the *New York Times* reported on July 11, has turned out to be toxic for those congressmen who voted for it. Lawmakers from both parties who backed TARP "remain haunted by the vote." Republicans expected healthcare to be the leading point of contention with Democrats for the November elections, but the bipartisan TARP vote has already become a "more resonant issue." Both parties underestimated how bitterly the people would react to government bailing out the profligate banks. Since the public is so opposed to the big banks, why is Dodd-Frank so favorable toward them?

Congress is given a place of primacy in the Constitution, making it the first branch of government and the most representative. Short elections, Jefferson said, will keep them honest. But a recent Gallup poll reports that one half of Americans have little or no confidence in Congress.

Small wonder.

Contributing editor William J. Quirk is the author of Courts & Congress. *Janek Kazmierski, a 2010 graduate, and Andrew D'Antoni, a law student, gave invaluable assistance in the preparation of this article.*

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I Say Goodbye, and I Say Hello

Barack Obama, you'll recall, campaigned as the antiwar candidate, at least insofar as Iraq was concerned. Iraq was a "war of choice," according to him, one that should not have been fought, and he defeated Hillary Clinton in the primaries precisely because of her support for Bush's war.

Not that there was anything principled about his stand: His reason for opposing the invasion was that it detracted from the war in Afghanistan, which, he claimed, was the theater we really needed to be operating in.

In spite of this, he was portrayed in the media, and by his other supporters, as the President who would repudiate the Bush foreign policy, especially where it concerns Iraq. This, at least, is what Obama's base expected to hear when he announced the withdrawal of the last of our combat troops. What they didn't expect to hear was what sounded like a retrospective endorsement of that war.

But that is precisely what they got.

According to the President, the invasion, far from being a mistake, was "a war to disarm a state" that "became a fight against an insurgency." Yet there was little, if anything, to disarm: Those "weapons of mass destruction" we heard so much about in the run-up to war were nowhere to be found.

Framing his speech in the form of a thank-you letter to the troops, Obama declared,

> They defeated a regime that had terrorized its people. Together with Iraqis and coalition partners who made huge sacrifices of their own, our troops fought block by block to help Iraq seize the chance for a better future. They shifted tactics to protect the Iraqi people; trained Iraqi Security Forces; and took out terrorist leaders. Because of our troops and civilians—and because of the resilience of the Iraqi people—Iraq has the opportunity to embrace a new destiny, even though many challenges remain.

This could be George W. Bush talking.

If the Iraqis were being terrorized before the invasion, at least it wasn't by foreigners. "A better future" hardly describes the state of Iraq today, or her likely state tomorrow: With half a million Iraqis in their graves on account of the "liberation," and government death squads roaming the land, the future of Iraq looks grim indeed. Those terrorist leaders Obama claims to have taken out would never have been in Iraq, were it not for the U.S. invasion. As for "embracing a new destiny," Iraq is fated to remain a battlefield, rather than a country, for quite a while yet. How many actual Iraqis embrace such a fate?

Virtually every word of Obama's speech on the Iraq "withdrawal" was a lie. To begin with, we aren't leaving; we are digging in. For every "combat" troop going home, a mercenary ("military contractor") is taking his place. And the "new mission" is indistinguishable, in practice, from the old mission, because the distinction between "combat troops" and "noncombat troops" is a distinction without a difference. All of our troops are "combat troops": The concept of "noncombat troops" is a not-very-convincing invention of the President's speechwriters and advisors. As news of yet more casualties in Iraq punctures this presidential fantasy, one can only wonder how his scribes will scramble to explain it to the American public.

Without a government—many months after the elections, the contending parties still can't agree on who should be prime minister—and with the insurgency rising up once more (the number and intensity of attacks have increased), Gen. Ray Odierno, top U.S. commander in Iraq, had already raised the possibility of U.S. forces "returning" to Iraq—and this was two days before the President's "Farewell, Iraq" speech.

The rhetoric employed by Obama is a curious mix of Bush triumphalism—"out of the ashes of war, a new beginning could be born"—and realist tropes, topped off with a desperate plea that Americans "turn the page." Openly acknowledging that he and his predecessor disagreed about the necessity of the Iraq war, Obama nevertheless hails the War Party as "patriots," while conferring on war opponents the same "patriotic" credentials. This kind of "we're all in this together" talk is—like practically everything this administration does—a political ploy: Obama needs the War Party (the Republicans in Congress) to continue their support for his Afghan adventure, as his own party has repeatedly deserted him.

This exercise in presidential hair-splitting teaches us one thing: No matter what party is in power, the War Party reigns supreme. When it comes to foreign policy, American politics truly stops at the water's edge. ◆

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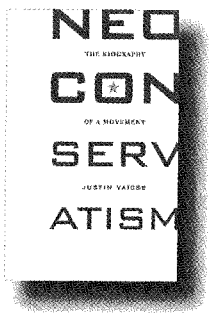

Always Something To Say

by James Kalb

Neoconservatism: The Biography of a Movement
by Justin Vaïsse
translated by Arthur Goldhammer
Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press
376 pp., $35.00

THERE ARE VERY FEW neoconservatives, people disagree on who they are, and they have no popular following or definite organizational structure. Even so, they have deeply affected American public life for 40 years.

Their influence has not gone unopposed. The term *neoconservative* began as an insult and remains one. Opponents tie the tendency to foreign interests, foreign wars, and the betrayal of conservatism and liberalism. Supporters respond with accusations of antisemitism and anti-Americanism, and sometimes take refuge in denials that the movement exists. There is room for a well-informed foreign historian to provide background and perspective.

Justin Vaïsse, a Frenchman, is at home among policy professionals on both sides of the Atlantic. The son of a prominent historian, he studied at Harvard (which published his book), is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, and has served as an advisor on matters concerning the United States with the Policy Planning Staff of the French Foreign Ministry.

That background aids his understanding but imposes limitations. Vaïsse avoids idiosyncrasy and falls back on conventional wisdom when discussing matters he has not specifically studied, such as the non-neoconservative right. He attends more to particular policies than to basic principles and pays little attention to neoconservatism in intellectual and cultural life generally. He believes that social and intellectual radicalism basically disappeared by the 1980's and does not notice their ongoing march through the institutions or the social and intellectual wreckage they continue to cause.

Within its limitations, the book gives a detailed account of neoconservatism from its origins to the present day, concentrating on the period before September 11, 2001, and indeed before the reinvention of the movement in the mid-90's. It emphasizes the complexity of the movement, the variety of the people and views it has included, its connections to both political parties, and its dependence on the cooperation of sympathetic moderates, liberals, neoliberals, and pragmatists.

Overall, Vaïsse finds neoconservatism fascinating as a demonstration of the influence of the intellectual and policy entrepreneur in America. He tries to be fair but tends toward the critical. He notes recent policy failures and shows that from the 1970's onward neoconservatives have routinely exaggerated foreign threats. He apparently accepts that they helped win the Cold War but is not willing to say so, and insists that the more accommodating policies of the later Reagan years were at least as helpful.

As the author tells the story, neoconservatism has gone through three phases or "ages" that overlapped in concerns and membership but differed in focus. The first began as early as 1965, the year of the founding of *The Public Interest* in New York (and the year after the Free Speech Movement began at Berkeley). Those involved, a group of prominent social scientists and argumentative New York intellectuals, were liberals and former leftists who rejected cultural radicalism, were dubious of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, and rather liked the America they grew up in. They carried forward the legacy of radicals and former radicals who had fallen out with the communists and favored a renewal of the "Cold War" or "vital center" liberalism of the 50's.

The Public Interest came out of a non-ideological form of liberalism oriented toward the social sciences. The publication's outlook was technocratic at first, but quickly became less so with the evident failure of Great Society programs. What remained was a rejection of ideology and concern with stubborn on-the-ground realities. As early as 1967, such concerns led the journal toward an emphasis on the limits of social policy.

These social scientists were soon joined by New York intellectuals who had broken with modish leftist politics and carried on the battle against radicalism in a more literary setting. The break was encouraged by the deterioration of relations between blacks and Jews, and by reconsideration of left-wing positions in the wake of the Six-

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Day War. It was rather sudden, already definitive by 1970, but *Commentary* and *The New York Review of Books* had shared the same writers until around 1968, and Noam Chomsky was publishing in both as late as 1969.

The McGovern defeat in 1972 led to neoconservatism's second phase, which ran concurrently with the first until both petered out in the early 90's. Associated with the Scoop Jackson Democrats, it had to do with practical politics. It fought to reverse the McGovernite takeover of the Democratic Party and promoted a vigorous anti-Soviet and pro-Israel foreign policy.

The McGovern people had dislodged machine politicians and other established figures in favor of a New Class of self-involved activists and professionals who put their social and cultural concerns ahead of national-security and bread-and-butter issues. The change was driving voters away from the Democratic Party, and the campaign to reverse it drew support from politicians who combined hawkishness with old-fashioned domestic liberalism. Sen. Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson, a pro-labor Cold War Democrat, was a leading figure in this effort until his sudden death in 1983; union leaders such as Lane Kirkland and policymakers such as Elmo Zumwalt also took part.

The growing practical orientation in neoconservatism also affected the intellectuals of the first stage, who proceeded to establish connections to general American conservatism that they were then able to expand into control of institutions and funding.

The 1970's saw a crucial shift in emphasis from domestic concerns to foreign policy. The early neoconservatives were generally skeptical of our entanglement in Southeast Asia and had no interest in an activist foreign policy. As the excitement of the 60's subsided, so did the urgency of domestic matters. New departures in social radicalism and major new government initiatives seemed unlikely, and the ineffectiveness or perversity of recent social programs had become an ordinary topic of discussion among policymakers. The New Class and the cultural changes of the 60's seemed here to stay, and the industrial unions were declining along with the blue-collar working-class and the ethnic communities they represented.

Under such circumstances, an attempt to reverse the domestic transformations stemming from the 60's seemed hopeless. Soviet opportunism and American weakness in the wake of Vietnam presented greater dangers and opportunities. Neoconservatives therefore focused on foreign policy, evolving a distinctive view that called for firm opposition to the Soviets and various Third World tyrants, promotion of Western values and institutions, and resolute support for Israel. Criticism of the social and cultural left did not disappear, though it slipped into the background. Some neoconservatives continued to promote specific policy and administrative reforms, an approach that became part of the ordinary routine of policymaking and led to victories on issues such as policing (the "broken windows" theory) and welfare reform. The focus of the movement, though, was permanently directed abroad.

Vaïsse sees an overall rightward tendency within neoconservatism. Nonetheless, the triumph of foreign policy made it visibly less conservative. Conservatism is domestic in orientation, since its first concern is the character of a people and its way of life. The early neoconservatives had been drawn to such issues, owing to their dislike of radicalism and skepticism toward social programs. Their concerns remained mostly sterile, however, because the neoconservatives, at bottom, remained liberal. Neoconservatives had doubts about post-60's initiatives such as affirmative action, but they supported the New Deal and the civil-rights revolution, and with them the principle of bureaucratic intervention in social and economic life to ensure individual fairness and security. That principle is at odds with social conservatism, which is based on informal local institutions that govern themselves; it is much more friendly to the needs of a strong military and an activist foreign policy.

The emphasis on foreign policy led many neoconservatives to migrate to the Republican Party in 1980. They had opposed the Nixon-Kissinger policy of détente but liked Carter even less, and Reagan seemed ready to take a harder line. As a former Democrat, union leader, and Cold War liberal, Reagan had many points in common with the neoconservatives. The move was personally wrenching, since most neoconservatives shared the common urban, intellectual, and ethnic prejudices toward Republicans. However, they received a warm welcome in exchange for their support, ideas, and prestige. And they wielded influence within their new party, especially in the early years of the new administration, and some changed party identification permanently.

Most viewed the Republican Party instrumentally, however, and began to reconsider as their influence weakened. They found the first President Bush too much a realist, and tended to support Bill Clinton in 1992—so much so that, after Clinton's election, many considered their mission accomplished and their movement dead. The Soviet threat was gone, and the head of the somewhat neoconservative Democratic Leadership Council had become president, so why not move on to other things?

The obituaries were premature. The mid-90's saw the rebirth of neoconservatism, leading to a third age that continues to the present. The third was something of a break from the first two: The 60's had become a distant memory, the collapse of communism had transformed foreign policy, and the passage of time had brought younger men, with no past connection to the Democratic Party or the liberal side

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of American politics, to the fore. Some veterans remained, but Irving Kristol and others became less active, and the lifelong apparatchiks took control.

The new leadership needed new goals to sustain the movement. They chose to think big, calling for "national greatness" and world peace through U.S. power and global democracy. They lined up a network of magazines, journalists, academics, officials, and committees in support of those goals, and when September 11 came that network was ready to provide themes, theories, and strategies that told policymakers what to do.

Over 40 years, neoconservatism had changed radically. It had abandoned labor unions, the Democratic Party, local ethnic and blue-collar communities, the decencies of ordinary people, and the law of unintended consequences in favor of national greatness and wars of global liberation. To some extent the evolution reflects the fate of movements that succeed and become careerist. It also reflects specific features of neoconservatism, as well as larger changes such as the replacement of public life and particularity with slogans, universal abstract structures, and the maneuverings of factions within elites.

From the author's account, the neoconservatives are a network of influential people who have been effective acting together to change public discussion through boldness, inventiveness, and ideas that appeal to American national feeling. Many have noted their skill in political and organizational maneuvering; others, the personal, professional, family, and ethnic connections that aid their cohesion. As Vaïsse writes, "there was and still is a definite clannishness to the neoconservative movement," and the clan is one "in which intellectual pugilism is the fundamental characteristic, [and] the unwritten but ironclad rule is never to attack a fellow neoconservative."

But what—apart from self-advancement and the joy of exerting influence—are the underlying concerns and purposes of the movement?

Some suggest a Straussian connection. The author dismisses that view, pointing out that Leo Strauss was politically skeptical and aloof. While there are neoconservatives who studied with him or his disciples, people who may have picked up his emphasis on the importance of political regime, their interests soon became far more practical. Some academic Straussians are neoconservative in orientation, but Vaïsse barely mentions them and evidently discounts their importance.

The Jewish connection is more substantial. Most neoconservatives are Jewish; *Commentary* was long published by the American Jewish Committee; the movement is insistently pro-Israel; some of its prominent members have ties to Likud; and Norman Podhoretz and others have explicitly connected their political concerns to what is good for the Jews.

However, Vaïsse denies that this connection explains the movement. Many neoconservatives are not Jews, and the vast majority of Jews are not neoconservative. Jews are more inclined toward political activism, and they include more leftists, so—inevitably—they include more former leftists. Also, Israel is not just a Jewish state. It is a Western outpost in a violent, volatile, and authoritarian region long targeted by America's enemies. And the arguments made by Podhoretz and others for conservatism among American Jews are far from self-seeking, though they are self-interested: The Jews have done well here, and political instability often hurts them, so why shouldn't they, too, favor a strong and stable America?

Vaïsse agrees that neoconservatism originally engaged issues of identity, but argues that the issues extended to neoconservatives who were not Jews. The early neoconservatives were academics and intellectuals who had begun life as outsiders and then "made it." They included Catholics and New Deal liberals from outside the Northeast. They were "unmeltable ethnics" who liked success but remembered their origins. They idealized America as a land defined by freedom, democracy, opportunity, and the middle-class disciplines that enabled them and their families to rise and establish themselves without turning against their heritage.

Such people combined an attachment to remembered particularities—unions, popular patriotism, blue-collar ethnic neighborhoods—with an attachment to American universalism. The former gave their views a conservative tinge, especially in contrast with the outlook of 60's radicals. As time passed the tinge faded, and neoconservatives defined their idealized America in ever-less-concrete terms. That tendency ended by transforming a movement that opposed radicalism and emphasized concrete realities into one that tended toward messianic universalism.

All in all, neoconservatism has expressed a form of American nationalism that has become increasingly reminiscent of Woodrow Wilson, and even of the Jacobins. It is reckoned conservative because of its nationalism, and because it favors capitalism over socialism. Its rebirth after the Cold War shows that neoconservatism is an enduring tendency capable of adapting to changing conditions. It can appeal to our governing elites, since it identifies universal principles with American power. Its support for Israel ensures the Jewish participation that confers legitimacy on a conservative movement. It continues to dominate the Republican Party, along with a network of magazines, think tanks, and foundations, and it influences many Democrats. Its goals of national greatness and universal freedom and democracy mean it can never lack for something to say. As Vaïsse notes, it evidently has a future as well as a past.

James Kalb is the author of The Tyranny of Liberalism.

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View From the Left Bank

by Catharine Savage Brosman

The Letters of Sylvia Beach
Keri Walsh, ed.
New York: Columbia University Press
347 pp., $29.95

After the Great War, Sylvia Beach founded, with money from her mother, Shakespeare and Company, an English-language bookshop and lending library on the Left Bank in Paris. As the American expatriate wrote much later, "I have always loved books and their authors." She was encouraged by another woman bookseller, Adrienne Monnier, well known to French literary historians. They were long-term lovers. Sylvia had been baptized Nancy, but renamed herself—presumably after her father, Sylvester, a Presbyterian minister. She had two sisters, one of whom likewise changed her name—to Cyprian—and took up with a woman.

Beach's shop became a gathering place for the Lost Generation and other American expatriate authors, whose writing she fostered. She is best known, however, as the publisher of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). She took on that task after Joyce, then living in Paris, found no one in England willing to print the entire work.

Beach's endeavors have been known to the literary world for decades. Numerous studies, reminiscences, and correspondences, some familiar to *Chronicles* readers, have documented her role; they include two volumes of Joyce's letters (1957), Stanislaus Joyce's memoir (1958), Beach's *Shakespeare and Company* (1959), Richard Ellmann's biography of Joyce (1959), Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* (1964), Noel Riley Fitch's *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation* (1983), and Joyce's letters to Beach (1987). It is thus unsurprising that no major revelations appear in this volume, which draws materials from American libraries (including Princeton, Buffalo, Indiana, the University of Texas), and from the British Library. (The Beach letters at the James Joyce Foundation in Zurich are currently closed to all but in-house scholars.)

Beach was a central figure but not a towering one, partly because she was not herself a major writer or critic. A facilitator, to be sure, but perhaps less important than Fitch's Foreword here suggests by calling her "the midwife of literary modernism." Unless, that is, *modernism* is defined as a purely Anglo-American phenomenon. Even it flourished elsewhere also, with little or no help from Beach—W.B. Yeats in Ireland, T.S. Eliot in England, Ezra Pound in England and Italy as well as Paris. Nor should one forget *The Little Review* and *The Dial.* In France, Gallimard publishers, the *Mercure de France*, the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, and others supported innovative writing (Marcel Proust's and André Gide's prose, Guillaume Apollinaire's verse) that overturned 19th-century fictional and poetic conventions.

The letters are organized by date in seven parts; the critical matter comprises an Introduction, references, a chronology, appendices, a glossary of correspondents, and an Index. Beach's correspondents included the composer George Antheil, "Bryher" (Annie Ellerman) and H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Janet Flanner ("Genêt" of *The New Yorker*), Ernest Hemingway, Marianne Moore, Ezra and Dorothy Pound, Gertrude Stein, Allen Tate, and William Carlos Williams. (Letters written to Beach are not included; it is thus sometimes difficult to grasp the circumstances in which she wrote and follow her remarks.) It should be added that Beach was no great stylist. Eccentricities of expression and spelling mark the letters as hers, but her writing was neither beautiful, incisive, nor profound. While many missives contain brief comments on new books as well as miscellaneous literary and biographical information, others are trivial (like Proust's laundry lists) or tedious, notably those concerning possible acquisition of Beach's Joyce collection by libraries. The volume reminds one generally of a conversation filled with facts and gossip appreciated by those present but of small appeal beyond that circle and time.

Catharine Savage Brosman is poetry editor for Chronicles.

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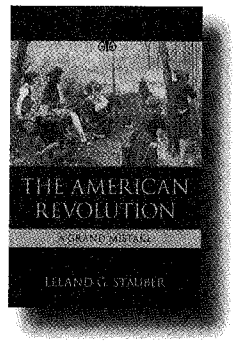

A Grand Missed Steak

by James O. Tate

The American Revolution: A Grand Mistake
by Leland G. Stauber
Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books
292 pp., $

Professor Stauber is not the first man I ever heard of who has suggested that the American Revolution was a mistake. Sigmund Freud thought that America herself was a mistake and made no distinction about the Revolution, but then he was a Sigmund-come-lately. And that makes Professor Stauber a Leland-come-lately, come to think of it. And that means that his thinking is inherently speculative, though it is not imaginative, or at least it is not imaginative enough.

Well, speculation can be fun or even funny, but for the professor it is neither. This is the most important thing to know about his book: It is so badly written that reading it is annoying in itself. I mean that all humor or irony is banished from the domain of Stauberthink, and there are some other promblems as well, or at least there are for me.

One of these is the one-sentence paragraph.

Another is the promblem of repetition. Another is the promblem of repetition.

And that wasn't a one-sentence paragraph, however promblematical or repetitive it may have been as the repetition of a promblem, and however undeveloped it also may have been, as well and in addition. Furthermore.

Hopefully, I have not implied that stylistic matters are the only "promblem" (as I have heard the word pronounced) with the test. With the text. With the sex. Thoughtfully, that is not the case. Truthfully. Not at all. Far from it, in addition. Far be it from me.

Because really, when you get down to it, what the professor is saying is that the USA would have been better off as a Canadian-type deal. And that's an interesting thought to my mind, particularly as Canada has produced so many notable comedians. But these same comedians came to prominence in the United States where the professor did not blossom as a comedian because he is an academic. And because he wants (wanted?) the USA to be more like Canada for a reason and that reason is not Canada but something else and you can probably guess what that is.

Guess what that is.

You guessed it. The professor wants the USA to have skipped the Revolution so that she would not—should not—had not . . . could not possibly have adopted the Constitution, because the Americans are neurotic about strong central government. Their government is hamstrung by its countervailing powers so that social issues cannot be addressed forcefully and conclusively. What social issues, you ask? I can't hear you. WHAT SOCIAL ISSUES?

Slavery is one such issue, and strong central government would have produced a solution to the promblem. The Civil War would have not been required because, by 1833, the British Empire had dissolved the peculiar institution, though the professor neglects the issue of compensation to the slaveholders. You remember the compensation to the slaveholders. Of Jamaica. The British solution, contrary to the fantasy, would not have worked in the United States because there were so many slaves that compensation was an arithmetical impossibility. Not to mention a political impossibility, as the abolitionists were against any compensation whatsoever (by definition), and the slaveholders were not about to be told that their legal rights and institutions and even property were immoral or ungodly or whatever. They were c-c-c constitutional. That's the promblem.

So the counterfactual engagement is fruitless, though certainly and increasingly America has produced many fruits. And this reminds me that the Revolution was "necessary" in the sense that the Union could not possibly have been fused much before it was, or much after. In that sense, the counterfactual is always pertinent, because nothing is inevitable except death and taxes.

The professor is, as it seems to me, barking up the wrong fruit tree. The United States doesn't need a strong central government—she already has one. The U.S. government is committed forever, like a humorless, droning ideologue, to a path set long ago. That path has to do with making war on civilians and seeing a pillar of fire as a proof of virtue and God's blessing. That path has to do with an endless series

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of Reconstructions, of social engineering projected on a global scale and magnified by bombing that produces shock and awe. The Constitution that so vexes the professor does not stop Washington from violating it routinely. Since the professor already has what he wants—an unaccountable, European-style Leviathan—his lack of imagination is all the more remarkable. He is a vigorous proponent or, as I may say, an athletic supporter of the Power State. He doesn't need to think or even fantasize, so he doesn't.

Thoughtfully, if he had, he could have looked at alternatives to the history of our relations with the "Indians." And there, I do believe that the Crown had a better policy than the frontiersmen did. Hopefully, he could have looked at other cultural possibilities as well also, in addition. A Spanish alternative. And in addition an Hispanic one moreover. A French one—guillotines are so alluring for power freaks. What if the Louisiana Purchase had never happened, for example for instance? What if through Spanish, Hispanic, and French alliances, the culture had been more Catholic and less Protestant? And what if equality had been a radical priority at an earlier time? We would have needed more government to enforce more equality, and that would have been vitally exciting indeed.

This could be the start of something great. Could be, I said. The start.

Contributing editor James O. Tate is a professor of English literature at Dowling College on Long Island.

from Sonnets From the Dark Lady

by Jennifer Reeser

11.

"In things right true, my heart and eyes have erred . . . "
—William Shakespeare, Sonnet 137

Because my viewer is denied the vision
Some label evil, others quality,
A vintage crop of silences, derision,
Or judgment passing for frivolity
Veneers our covert confidence. I rank
That voice and conversation the crescendo
Of all—its depths fermented Muscat, dank
Or Asti sweet, profaning innuendo
In its superior ranges. Intuition
However would appear to him nonsense.
Thus, I manifest as vineyard apparition—
Discourse without desire for recompense;
Because he tastes few favored among wine,
And even less for savoring of mine.

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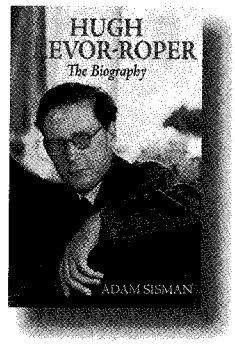

Stumbling Past the Tree

by Francis Phillips

Hugh Trevor-Roper: The Biography
by Adam Sisman
London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson
648 pp., £25

THIS IS A SOLID AND SENSIBLE biography, but it is not a scintillating one. I have the impression that Adam Sisman is a little wary of his subject; he indicates respect for Hugh Trevor-Roper, but not affection. Yet without personal warmth to some degree, it is hard to catch the reader's imagination. However, there is much in the life of the famous Oxford historian to make one ponder both the man and his milieu.

Born in 1914, Trevor-Roper's upbringing shows the cruelty and rigor of his class. His parents were undemonstrative and uninvolved in their children's lives; from the nursery, Hugh, their elder son, went to prep school, where he won a scholarship to Charterhouse; thence the inevitable scholarship to Christ Church, Oxford. Emotionally awkward and intellectually precocious, he accepted the (then) all-male world of a major Oxford college, with its intrigues, sumptuous living, and intellectual eminence, as his natural habitat.

The philosopher Freddie Ayer, a friend, provides a deft portrait: He admired Trevor-Roper's breadth of culture and his stylistic elegance; he also appreciated his malice, his anticlericalism, and his maverick attitude toward authority. In 1941, Hugh wrote an astute self-appraisal in his diary: "Pride is my chief fault and will be my undoing"; also "imprudence, ostentation, volubility and the need for company." I would question only the last: A bachelor don until aged 39, he could be solitary as well as gregarious. In 1943 he records that he had read 119 books.

Trevor-Roper's favorite author was Edward Gibbon, whom he read constantly. Secretly, he cherished the ambition to become "another Gibbon." Yet though his literary output was considerable (further books, left aside, have appeared posthumously), he never wrote a definitive work, an important book on a subject or era that he had made his own. The Puritan Revolution was meant to be the great theme, and throughout his life his friends urged him to write on it. Toward the end, he confessed in a letter that "The trouble is, I am too interested in too many things; and I write so slowly . . . and then, there are the delights of idleness."

This was true—a delight exacerbated by marriage to the daughter of Earl Haig in 1954. Hugh was already drawn to the aristocratic life and dining with duchesses; he was exhilarated by foreign travel and his friendships with exotic elderly male mentors: first Logan Pearsall-Smith, and then Bernard Berenson. His wife, Xandra, described by her brother as a "luxury girl," required a high standard of living. Though an odd couple, they were devoted to each other despite frequent tantrums on her part and some exasperation on his. He once wrote to her, "Consider the facts. You expect me to earn more money than I am paid at Oxford. To do this I must write for the *Sunday Times* . . . "

When not producing beautifully written essays on a rich range of subjects, with a fondness for spies, oddballs, and conspiracies, Trevor-Roper engaged in journalism—of a very high standard but not what was usually expected of a Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, a post Hugh obtained through much back-room politicking, at the age of 43. *The Last Days of Hitler*, a *tour de force* published in his early 30's, made him internationally famous, but in a sense it also proved his nemesis. Throughout his academic career thereafter, he was often asked to authenticate dubious Nazi material. Almost all—*Hitler's Table Talk* was the exception—he found fraudulent. The work brought in lucrative fees, but ended in tragicomedy when the "Hitler Diaries," to which he lent authentication, were swiftly proved to be a forgery. He courageously took sole responsibility for this massive error of judgement, while the *Sunday Times* team that had forced the pace stayed largely silent.

A revealing comment on Trevor-Roper's personality comes from his publisher, Hamish Hamilton, who (in 1950) wondered "if one so young and gifted ought to spend quite so much time hating people. He has hardly a charitable word for anyone." Sisman says he mellowed in later life; yet malicious gossip and intrigue was a constant feature of his behavior. The key to this may be his admission to his future wife (wrung from him under protest) that "when I was a child I never saw, in my own

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home, any evidence of any emotion whatever . . . this has been a great personal difficulty for me . . . "

Perhaps it also accounts for Trevor-Roper's hostility toward religion. Faith demands vulnerability, something he could not allow himself to show. His Oxford mentor, Maurice Bowra, thought the Catholic Church "a haven for those who feel a natural aversion to thought." Hugh went him one better: The fundamental pillars of Christian doctrine were "intellectually trash"; Original Sin and the divinity of Christ were "mumbo-jumbo." Temperamentally as well as intellectually, he was an Enlightenment figure; as early as 1937, while walking in Christ Church Meadow, "I suddenly realised that metaphysics are metaphysical . . . and at once, like a balloon that has no moorings, I saw the whole metaphysical world rise and vanish out of sight . . . "

There is a lively section toward the end of the book, describing the unholy machinations of the Fellows of Peterhouse, Cambridge, where Trevor-Roper had quixotically—but unhappily as it turned out—accepted the mastership. He described them as "the mafia"; others, who only saw this caucus, led by Maurice Cowling, emerge after dark to conduct its plots against their Master, as "the vampires."

By this stage, as his wife is soon to show signs of Alzheimer's and his own eyesight and health begin to deteriorate, the reader feels pity for so brilliant a figure now marked by pathos. When Xandra had to go into a home, to the astonishment of his stepchildren (she had had a previous marriage), Hugh burst into tears.

Goethe once wrote, "Grey my dear friends, is all that theory is, but green the tree of life." In his learning, Trevor-Roper displayed many dazzling theories. Somehow, he stumbled past the tree of life.

Francis Phillips writes from Buckinghamshire, England.

A Capital Idea . . .

Since last spring the value of the stock market has increased 50 percent. Perhaps you had the good fortune to buy stocks a year ago and are considering selling them but wish to avoid a capital-gains tax.

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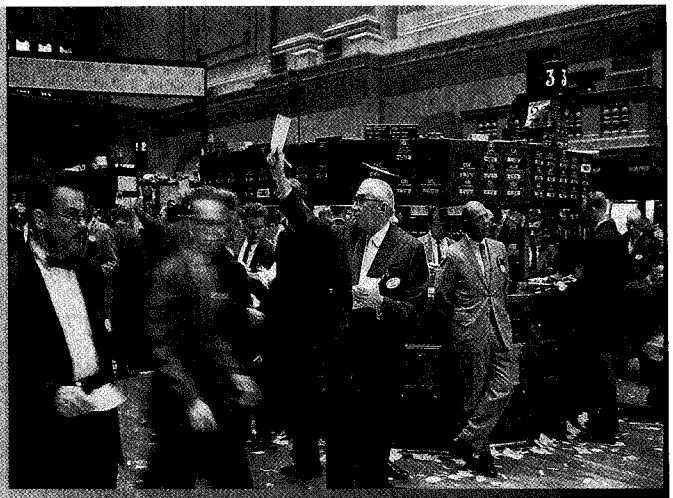

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The Easy Persuasion

I HAVE READ in the newspapers lately that the scholarly journals have begun to experiment with a new procedural system of editorial acceptance. For generations, article submissions have been made to the editors, who in turn sent the manuscripts out for peer review by specialists in the field. Grants of academic tenure depend heavily on a record of scholarly publication, and so much is at stake for a young professor seeking to place an article in a prestigious journal. Thus, it is hardly surprising that the slow and allegedly clubby old method of peer review is under attack by proponents of a plan to post the submitted manuscripts online and solicit comments or suggestions, not from specialists alone but from all and sundry in cyberspace, exactly as Wikipedia does. The learned editors in their ivory towers will then act as final judges in the matter.

All sorts of theories have been advanced to explain why liberalism has triumphed to the degree that it has in the world. According to many theorists, it is because the Rights of Man will not be denied. Hegel thought that the universal struggle for recognition dictates that men are driven by their nature to insist on a realization of the dignity that human nature confers upon them. Fukuyama argued that liberal democracy, as an idea and indeed an ideal, cannot be improved upon, no matter the temporary setbacks it might encounter in the posthistorical future.

All this may be so, or it may not be. The truth is, all such vaporous speculations are only a waste of time and mental energy, like any intellectual undertaking that insists on ignoring the obvious proximate explanation in favor of distant theoretical speculation. The reason for liberalism's success plainly has nothing to do with man's nature, or with Providence (as Tocqueville thought), or with the Triumph of Reason. It is the result, quite simply, of a single, simple fact: Liberalism, in theory and in practice, is easy. It is the prevailing simpleminded political doctrine (never to be confused with a philosophy) of weak-minded people suffering from a form of intellectual and moral laziness that produces a debilitating, and finally fatal, acquiescence, slackness, timidity, cowardice, nonresistance, and surrender in true believers and fellow travelers alike, and, finally in those who happen merely to be hanging about the neighborhood.

Liberalism amounts to the Politics of Easy. Whoever has grasped that fact knows all he needs to know about this most subversive and dangerous political tendency in history. Liberalism is by far the easiest thing that has ever appeared under the sun—except, of course, for conservatives and other nonliberals ignorant and impudent enough to resist it. It is true that, early on in its history, liberalism suffered its own martyrs. Still, liberals have had an easy time of it for the most part, owing to their typically elite status and the speed with which their doctrine made progress in the world, until, better than a century ago, they became the new privileged class, distinguished by their ideological commitments and their emotional orientation.

The founding theorists of liberalism—Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and the rest of them—began by getting rid of the gigantic log that lay square across the path. They accomplished this feat by simply pretending that the log didn't exist, and never had. Avoiding the ontological problems with which the ancient, early Christian, medieval, and monarchical philosophers had struggled, the liberal philosophers simply ignored every existential issue relating to the question of man's origin (divine or otherwise) and essential nature, and proceeded as if no thinker of consequence had ever felt himself compelled to address them. These late-coming intellectual titans had no time for such irrelevant notions as the distinction between the City of Man and the City of God, long accepted by Christian philosophers, or the doctrine of the King's Two Bodies, the foundations for which were laid by the Norman Anonymous around A.D. 1100 in England. Instead, they made a grand leap of faith, unmatched in history, and landed on the smooth (if rather unpleasantly hard) ground, already cleared of brush and trees, of Reason. Pure reason beguiled them into fantastical concepts such as the Social Contract, man enchained by civilization, and the Rights of Man, all of them far less rational (not to mention less attested to by compelling evidence) than the doctrines of the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and Original Sin. Still, they continued to condemn what they called superstition without ever taking the trouble to examine supernatural claims by the application of their practical imaginations.

The problem for liberalism is that removing man from his divine pedestal takes him off the gold standard in respect of every human category: religious, moral, intellectual, artistic, social, and political. In this way, liberalism makes everything easy

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for the liberal: his agnosticism, his "ethics," his "thought," his "art," his uncouth and antisocial behavior, and his ideological politics. It begins by banishing standards and proceeds from there to encourage dishonesty, fraud, self-delusion, and the spirit of untruth in all who succumb to its laziness, its sloppiness, and its lies. Liberalism makes it easy to believe in nothing, learn nothing, and accede to everything. It seems, in its way, the most enviable persuasion in the history of the world, when we consider the unhappy fact that so many of us—indeed, from time to time, all of us—would so gratefully elect to assume the status of bovis, in preference to that of Jovis, in the world.

KIERKEGAARD OBSERVED that the people who demand the freedoms to which, as human beings, they think they are entitled are the people least likely to exercise the one freedom that no government can deny them, which is the freedom to think. For 200 years, liberalism in the form of popular democracy has encouraged people not to think for themselves; today, ideological hyperdemocracy would punish them for doing so, by making an extraordinarily difficult mental operation a dangerous one as well.

It is really no long step from the pseudoscholarship that is routinely printed in scholarly journals and advertised in university-press catalogs to the gangbang scholarship practiced by Wikipedia and now proposed by the reformers of the professorial periodicals. The Old Liberal Whig scholarship of the 19th and early 20th centuries was one-sided, oversimplified, tendentious, and smug, but it was still recognizably scholarship of a kind. The New Liberal postmodern scholarship is only pretentious fakery. One reason for this is ideological, the other social. A significant effect of the availability of higher education, first to the bourgeois mass and later to the proletarian masses beneath it, has been to glamorize the intellectual and the artist, to inspire in trivial and thoroughly banal minds the ambition to be one or the other (or both), and to persuade them that they have the mental capacity to fill the role. Liberalization has made it possible for them to do so, by degrading the standards and tastes that, in an earlier age, would have exposed them for what they actually were. Anyone who looks into a much-celebrated modern novel, hears a composition by a much-touted contemporary composer, or observes a widely exhibited painting or sculpture and has the inward, half-guilty, and self-doubting response that the work of supposed art in question required no skill or even intelligence in its making is, more likely than not, exactly right. Liberalism makes all these things easy, because it imposes no intellectual standards on them. And that is a very important explanation for why most writers and artists today are liberal. Liberal intellectuals have assumed, from the 1930's onward, that all intellectuals are liberals, because liberals are more intelligent and creative than ordinary people. In fact, the opposite is true. Liberalism makes it possible for academic novelists, historians, painters, and composers to play a successful game of let's pretend that allows them to present themselves to each other, to publishing houses and impresarios, and to the public as bloomin' geniuses, and get away with it. Nobody knows better. Not the editor, not the impresario, not the vast majority of the audience. It is far, far easier not to know—or care.

Liberalism makes other things easy, too; all things, indeed. Nobody needs anymore to have what people used to call morals, meaning a code that demands some sacrifice on the part of whoever subscribes to it. In their place, liberalism offers "ethics." which require only that someone should hold a liberally specified attitude toward, or opinion about, something—one that costs him nothing while allowing him to congratulate himself on thinking rightly. Right thinking comes easily, too, because it ensures that liberals need never fear incurring the disapproval or enmity of other liberals, who are the only people they associate with anyway—a predilection that further spares them the mental effort and social unpleasantness of having ever to defend an unpopular idea. Since, for liberals, the only behavior that really counts is thought behavior, social relations are easy, too. Dressing in the morning is easy—no need for a coat and tie on any occasion, including work, international travel, and funerals. No need for constraining manners and other forms of strict and onerous bourgeois civility, from which the authenticity of proletarian social norms has rescued us. No need for going to the bother of weddings or marriage (excepting "gay marriage," for the sake of human equality and to make a political statement), and no need to work at a marriage that can be terminated as easily as a pregnancy. Under the reign of liberalism, the world itself, it almost seems, is made easy, and we all just go flopping along.

In the realm of theology, all liberal or liberalized religions, from Episcopalianism to the faith of the megachurches, are religion made easy for everyone, congregation and clergy alike. The Catholic Church Herself, since Vatican II, has been religion made easier for the spiritual descendants of the great saints, martyrs, and Fathers of the Church, and for the children and grandchildren of Catholics who faithfully attended Sunday service each week, celebrated in the Tridentine Rite. As for political theory and practice, they, too, have been reduced by liberalism to an easily expressed and easily understood trinity of identity and interest-group politics, entitlement, and rights, surrounded by the sheltering crèche of paternalistic government.

"It is much harder to believe than not to believe," said Flannery O'Connor. That is why liberals believe nothing, and know less. ◆

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Aaron D. Wolf

Mormon Apocalypse, Part I

America is special. America has a mission. America is a beacon of liberty. America, God shed His grace on thee.

We call it American exceptionalism—the belief that, from among the countries of the world, the United States of America has been uniquely called by God to be X. In this equation, X equals whatever you think America stands for.

The Shining City on a Hill, the New Jerusalem, Manifest Destiny, the Sacred Union, the Great Society, the protector of God's chosen people—X has many incarnations, some of them draped with Geneva gowns or encased in sidewinder missiles.

Harsh realities have pulled Christians back from the brink of this idolatry—half a million dead here, a generation lost to a sexual or unitarian revolution there—causing believers to remember that Stone that smashed the idol of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, or that line from Kipling about being one with Nineveh and Tyre. Maybe we're not so special after all. Or just as special as, say, those Iraqi Christians recently liberated from their homes and churches.

Like Rome, America has a religion that supports and guarantees her greatness, one that sacralizes her exceptionalism. Imagine, if you will, if this country had a sacred past, one that factored into the salvation narrative itself. You look at this vast continent, and your mind boggles—all of this land, and it was only occupied by loincloth-wearing animists for a thousand or more years? Was anyone else here before them? Where did the lost tribes of Israel go? What if they came here! And since transatlantic travel was pretty scarce during the first century A.D., and since Jesus Christ came first "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," wouldn't it follow that He appeared, resurrected from the dead, right here in America? And lest the gates of Hell prevail, doesn't it then follow that a record of this would be written down, on golden tablets that would endure centuries of weather, and buried for later discovery? And (skipping ahead) wouldn't the discovery here of "another testament of Jesus Christ" firmly establish the uniqueness, the permanence of America? And (skipping further ahead) wouldn't any threat to America therefore be an attack on God?

W. Cleon Skousen thought so. For him the threat was the Red Menace, and he fought it on behalf of Elohim as an FBI special agent, a speaker for the John Birch Society, and in his book *The Naked Communist* (1958), in which he prophetically listed the goals of communism—many of which were fulfilled during the Cold War.

Skousen, you may have guessed, was a committed Mormon. As such, he denied the key tenets of Christianity, while using biblical terminology. Thus, for example, he believed that the one we all know as god, the father of Jesus (and Lucifer), was once a mere creature, but this "Elohim" "acquired," through virtue, the glory and power of a god, being recognized as such by the universe's "vast numbers of intelligences." Thus, Skousen wrote (in 1953),

> since God "acquired" the honor and sustaining influence of "all things" it follows . . . that if He should do anything to violate the confidence or "sense of justice" of these intelligences, they would promptly withdraw their support, and the "power" of God would disintegrate.

You may ask yourself, why in the world would anyone become a Mormon? This perception isn't lost on the Latter-Day Saints, who don't advertise that you, too, could rule your own galaxy, any more than Tom Cruise speaks publicly of the fate of the Thetans. Instead, they make those heartwarming commercials about family time and other things that interest conservatives.

Like, say, the threat of communism. Or liberals. Or the "racist" Barack Obama. Or any other threat to the aforementioned American exceptionalism.

Glenn Beck, the weeping conservative firebrand, has been a Mormon for a little over ten years. And while he pays homage to the writings of such great conservatives as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King, Jr.—which writings he calls "our American scriptures"—Beck has made it no secret that his favorite author is Cleon Skousen. Not Cleon Skousen, apologist of Interplanetary Elohim, but Cleon Skousen, author of *The 5,000 Year Leap* (1981), a catalog of the "divine" teachings of America's Founding Fathers, who, it turns out, were to a man advocates of Mormon-style American exceptionalism. Beck urges his audiences to purchase the book, for which he has written a new Foreword.

It was the unstated theme of Mormon-style American exceptionalism that undergirded every word of Glenn Beck's keynote speech at his recent "ecumenical" Restoring Honor rally in Washington, D.C.

To be continued . . . ◆

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To Secede or Succeed?

OVER A DECADE AGO, Don Livingston organized a Liberty Fund Colloquium in Charleston, South Carolina. One of the sessions examined whether any movement toward political decentralization was possible without at least the threat of secession to back it up.

On that subject, most of the attendees agreed: Whether one regards secession as good in itself, or as a tool that it may become necessary to use, it hardly seems possible to bring about political decentralization without being willing and able to use secession to force the hand of the central government.

But one thing troubled me: How realistic is the threat of political secession today, given the level of economic and cultural centralization in the United States? If a state seceded today and President Obama decided to prevent it, would he send in the military? Or would he simply pick up the phone and tell the CEO of Walmart that, if he wishes to continue doing business in the remaining 49 united states, Walmart should immediately shut down all of its stores in the newly independent one?

It's a question many proponents of secession seem reluctant to consider. Some see it as a nonissue, because they're convinced that economic problems will always work themselves out. Others simply compare the gross domestic products of the various states with the GDP of small countries around the world, forgetting just how much of each state's GDP today is dependent on national and multinational corporations, not to mention state and local governments that are dependent on federal grants and loans.

None of this, of course, touches on the constitutionality of secession. But threatening political secession while assuming, more or less, that the economic and cultural problems will work themselves out is putting the cart before the horse.

We see this in mirror image in discussions of Mexican irredentism. Those who think that the American Southwest may someday break off from the United States and unite with Mexico argue that the cultural cohesion of recent Mexican immigrants to Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, and their continued economic ties to family back home, will tip the balance. The solution advanced by those who don't want to see the Southwest leave the Union is Americanization—English-only education and baseball rather than Spanish and soccer, McDonald's and Walmart rather than taco stands and family-owned Mexican stores.

At that Liberty Fund conference in the late 90's, Professor Livingston predicted that, within a decade, secession would be a topic that could be discussed publicly. He was right. But that doesn't mean that political decentralization, let alone outright secession, is any closer today.

Does that mean that all hope is lost? Should we decide that greater centralization is inevitable and, in the words of one-time Texas gubernatorial candidate Clayton Williams, "just relax and enjoy it"?

Not at all. But we need to cast aside the assumption that big problems require equally grand solutions.

Wendell Berry famously responded to the fatuous environmental slogan "Think globally, act locally" by urging his readers to "Think locally and act locally." But many of the advocates of secession have swung past Berry. They love the place where they live and the people they live among; and so they do "think locally." But they still feel compelled to "act globally" or, at least, to react against global trends in ways that are unlikely to bring about concrete change.

Such an attitude can justify complacency regarding the things over which we have the most control. If I can save a few bucks by shopping at Walmart, why shouldn't I? Government is the problem, not big business. If I don't like what government policies have done to my city, why shouldn't I simply move, so that I can continue to concentrate my efforts on Washington, D.C., without the distractions of daily life?

If someone suggests growing your own garden, planting a fruit tree or two, learning to love your neighbors, living close to where you work and shopping close to where you live, marrying and having children and rearing and educating them well, and preparing your soul to meet its Maker, he is accused of quietism or of failing to understand just how profound the crisis really is. All of those things may have been well and good, in a different time; but today, such things must give way to political action.

But what if the best political action in the long term is decidedly unpolitical in the short? Can we have political decentralization without first having vibrant local economies and cultures that are more than simply minor variations on the culture of New York and Los Angeles?

Might the answer, in fact, lie not so much with secession as with the building of true communities of faith, and hope, and love? ◆

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Remember Katyn

by Christie Davies

I ARRIVED IN POLAND just as the television announced the tragic death of President Lech Kaczyński, his wife, Maria, and many of Poland's military and political leaders in an airplane crash at Smolensk in Russia. A week of mourning followed throughout the entire country.

The president had been traveling to Smolensk for a joint commemoration with the Russians of the 70th anniversary of the murder of over 20,000 Polish officers by the Soviet secret police at Katyn in 1940. The officers had been captured by the Red Army when the Soviets invaded, occupied, and annexed Eastern Poland in September 1939 by agreement with their Nazi allies who had invaded from the West. Between them they had destroyed Poland. Molotov, the Soviet commissar of foreign affairs who had signed the pact with Ribbentrop, his Nazi counterpart, to divide the whole of Eastern Europe into Soviet and Nazi occupied sections, cackled, "One swift blow to Poland, first by the German Army and then by the Red Army, and nothing was left of this bastard of the Versailles Treaty." World War II began in Europe in 1939 as a joint enterprise between these two bandits, and their first victim was Poland.

The Soviets deported one and a half million Poles to Siberia or to their Central Asian colonies as slave labor. Hundreds of thousands of them died from their harsh treatment. A special fate was reserved for the Polish officers, many of them cadets and reservists who, in civilian life, had been professional men, businessmen, and officials. Among them were priests and rabbis serving as chaplains, including Baruch Steinburg, chief rabbi of the Polish army. For many months the Soviets tried to break their religious faith and their attachment to their native land. When this failed, they were taken into the forest, their hands tied behind their backs, their mouths stuffed with sawdust, their coats wrapped round their heads, and shot in the back of the head. Their corpses were secretly buried in this remote place. The NKVD were well practiced in this kind of rapid mass-killing and wore leather butcher's aprons so as not to be spattered with blood. The murderers used German pistols and bullets that they received in exchange for the Soviet fuel that was used in the Luftwaffe's bombing of London in 1940. Truly a joint enterprise.

The purpose of this crime was to eliminate the leaders and potential leaders of the Polish nation. Like the Nazis, the Soviets hoped to destroy Polish national identity. Then the bandits fell out, and on June 22, 1941, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union. One of the claims made by the Soviets and by their numerous leftist sympathizers in the West has been that the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland, the Baltic states, and parts of Finland and Rumania was to provide a buffer zone to make it easier to resist such an invasion. Why, then, were the Soviets so hopelessly unprepared when the attack happened? Why was the buffer zone not fortified against attack? Why did they not heed the warnings of the British, the Americans, and even their own spies that the Nazi invasion, Operation Barbarossa, was about to happen? Why had they alienated the people who lived in the countries they had occupied by their cruelty to individuals and their attacks on these nations' institutions and identity? There was nothing to stop the rapid advance of the Nazi army. The Soviets had no friends, only the enemies they themselves had created.

Now in desperation, the Soviets tried to recruit some of the Poles they had exiled to help fight against the Nazis. Those Poles who had fled west were already fighting alongside British soldiers and submariners and with particular bravery and effectiveness as pilots in the Royal Air Force. The Polish Lt. Gen. Władysław Anders, trying to recruit an army from the Poles in the Soviet Union, now realized that 15,000 Polish officers were missing and gave Stalin a list of their names. In a conversation with the Polish Gen. Władysław Sikorski, leader of the Polish government-in-exile, Stalin absurdly claimed that the officers had somehow ventured into Manchuria, then occupied by the Japanese, and had not been heard from since. By 1942 Anders realized that they had been murdered by the Soviets. All questions by the Americans and the British about the men who might otherwise have been released to fight with their fellow countrymen at Monte Cassino and in Normandy were rebuffed by the Soviets.

There the matter might have remained, but in 1943 the Nazis discovered the mass graves and exhumed the Polish officers. For them it was a tremendous propaganda coup, for the forensic evidence against their Soviet enemy was so powerful that, for once, there was no need for the Nazis to lie or exaggerate. Independent forensic scientists were called in to examine the bodies and the officers' possessions, and it was clear the men had been killed and buried in 1940 when the Soviets controlled the area. American and British prisoners of war, taken to Katyn against their own wishes, later confirmed that the German account was true. Churchill and Roosevelt accepted that the Soviets were guilty but did not wish publicly to affirm this, lest it cause tensions with the Soviets now fighting hard on the Eastern Front. The Polish government-in-exile wanted an inde-

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pendent inquiry, but it was made clear to them that neither they nor truth or morality now mattered at all.

The Poles' worst fears were confirmed in 1944 when the Germans retreated and the Red Army came close to Warsaw. At this point the Polish Home Army, that patriotic underground force in contact with the Polish government-in-exile, rose up against the Nazis and took control of much of the city, expecting that the Soviet forces would assist them to drive the Nazis back decisively. Instead, the Soviets deliberately and cynically held back and allowed the Nazis to defeat and crush the Poles and to lay waste to Poland's capital. The Soviets forced back and in some cases shot down British and American aircraft dropping supplies to the besieged Poles. The Soviets wanted the Polish leadership and Poland's identity to be eliminated and were happy to have the Nazis do much of the dirty work for them.

The American and British governments went on accepting—indeed, almost endorsing—the Soviet lies about Katyn long after the conclusion of World War II, when their common enemy had been defeated. When the Nazi war criminals were put on trial in Nuremburg in 1946, the Soviet Union had the impudence to accuse Hermann Goering and his codefendants of being responsible for Katyn and introduced forged evidence and perjured testimony in support of its case. The British and American judges carefully buried the paperwork, so as not to have to make any ruling whatsoever. The very presence of a Soviet judge at Nuremburg, a representative of the power that had jointly planned with the Nazis an aggressive war against Poland, rendered the proceedings morally dubious; to have convicted Goering of Katyn, when he clearly had no hand in it, would have been to follow tragedy with farce.

In the United States, the Korean War and fears about the fate of American prisoners there led to a thorough investigation of what had happened at Katyn and revealed that the leftists and appeasers surrounding Roosevelt, who had remained influential after his death, had conspired to conceal and even destroy documents that conclusively proved the guilt of the Soviets. Yet "progressive" thinkers and gutless peacemongers—and, later, revisionist historians—in both the United States and Britain went on denying the truth, despite the overwhelming evidence. When Gorbachev half-admitted and Yeltsin fully admitted that it was an entirely Soviet crime, the leftists simply erased all mention of Katyn from their writings. It had become a matter to downplay and forget. "Genocide in the pursuit of equality is no crime. Humanity in the pursuit of social justice is no virtue. Support murder, deny murder, forget murder." Such is the leftist creed, as we have subsequently seen in relation to Mao's China and Pol Pot's Cambodia.

Britain went to war in 1939 to safeguard the integrity of Poland when she was attacked by the bestial Nazis in collusion with the evil Soviet empire. Britain failed utterly to achieve this aim, and at Yalta the Poles were sold into communist slavery. Those Poles who had come to Britain to fight for a common cause or who became refugees were treated badly. The communists and the left wing of Britain's Labour Party wanted them sent back to Poland, to a likely death. Those permitted to stay were not allowed to live or to work where they chose but were forced into a limited range of harsh industrial tasks. Polish qualifications were not recognized, and there was strong discrimination against Poles who sought to enter academic life.

The Poles' presence in Britain was inconvenient because they consistently demanded that the full truth about Katyn, about the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, and about the crushing of the Warsaw uprising be publicly proclaimed. This terrified the spineless British Foreign Office, which forced the council of Kensington and Chelsea in London to cancel plans to build a Katyn memorial in the center of Britain's capital. Later, the memorial was erected in Gunnersbury in West London, but even here that was a row about the inscribing of the date 1940 on it, the year when everybody knew the Soviets carried out their mass murders. The Foreign Office then tried to prevent British ex-servicemen from attending the inauguration in uniform. Like the British diplomatic service, the Foreign Office always grotesquely overestimates the impact of words and symbols, and both are terrified by strong verbal confrontations. It is the necessary obverse of their gross overestimating of what can be achieved by the polite ambiguity and deception of diplomats—get a paper agreement, however bad, and do not consider the consequences. Could they realistically argue that the Soviets, however irritated, would have gone to war over a Katyn memorial in a British cemetery, when many such memorials existed in other countries, including the United States?

This year, the Russian government has at last come clean. The Soviet documents about the massacre are being published on the worldwide web, and the Polish film *Katyń* has been shown on prime-time television in Russia. For the first time NATO troops have marched in the parade held in Moscow to mark the anniversary of the end of World War II, and the Polish servicemen have been given pride of place, coming immediately after the Russians.

We can now see that World War II did not end in Europe in 1945, but on June 4, 1989, when the first truly free and independent Polish government was elected, nearly 60 years after Polish sovereignty had been jointly destroyed by the Soviets and the Nazis, which was the cause of the war. Soon all the other socialist governments in Eastern Europe collapsed, and the Soviet Union itself disintegrated. The Poles were vindicated. Free at last.

Christie Davies is lecturing in Krosno, Poland.

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Imagine No More Mersey

by Greg Kaza

A SEVEN-FOOT BRONZE STATUE of the late Beatle John Lennon greets travelers at the international airport in Liverpool that bears his name. It's fitting that Lennon's impish image—hands inserted in pants pockets—is displayed at the airport adjacent to the Mersey River. Lennon emigrated from blue-collar Liverpool, a one-time symbol of Great Britain's manufacturing strength, to New York's posh Central Park West. His visage has a wry grin, but it is we who are laughing at ourselves when a porter explains how to put our left-handed stick in reverse—a maneuver, thankfully, we were not forced to execute on the 340-kilometer jaunt up various motorways (40, 6, 62) to Merseyside. Before finding his faith, Thomas, the main character in Antonioni's mod classic *Blow Up* (1967), drove a British-built Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud assembled in nearby Crewe. Our rental is French.

Liverpool is not a Strawberry Field or Magical Mystery Tour. There are pagans on Beatles pilgrimages and Hindus taking root in her postindustrial landscape. The one eternal is the Mersey, rising from the Rivers Goyt and Tame near Manchester and flowing into Liverpool Bay and the Irish Sea. British manufacturing and empire were ascendant in the 19th century, when cotton imported from the American South *via* Liverpool was a raw material for Manchester's textile mills. But the decline of manufacturing and empire meant, by the mid-20th century, that rockabilly and blues replaced a physical product as the economic trade nexus. These imports influenced the Beatles and British Invasion bands like the Searchers, which adopted its name from the 1956 John Ford classic. The Mersey, for many Americans, remains associated with the 1964 hit "Ferry Cross the Mersey," by Gerry and the Pacemakers. Gerry Marsden, unlike Lennon, remained in Liverpool, and his recording "You'll Never Walk Alone" is the local football club's anthem.

THE MERSEY IS MARKED by its ebb and flow—both the water within it and the humanity around it. A century ago, British economic power and culture reigned. Today, the Far East plays a leading role. Motor vehicles would not be assembled in Liverpool without the British government and Indian entrepreneurs. Mumbai-based Tata Motors Ltd. acquired Jaguar from Ford in 2008, and the Land Rover is built at the Merseyside assembly plant in suburban Halewood. British-government loan guarantees to Jaguar and its suppliers, coupled with a one-year pay freeze and a four-day work week, helped Jaguar survive the 2007-09 credit crisis, and Tata announced its first quarterly profit in early 2010. As Mr. C. Ramakrishnan, Tata Motors' CFO, explained to the *Liverpool Echo* earlier this year, "The Chinese market is a very good market for Jaguar volumes. We have benefited from globalization of the market." British motor-vehicle manufacturing thus has a new *modus operandi*: production driven by government intervention and capital investment from a former colony with a high savings rate.

British manufacturing's decline under successive Labour and Conservative governments cannot be saved by a tourist economy built on American baby-boomer nostalgia for the pop music of their youth. John, Paul, George, and Ringo are no match for offshoring. Detroit can match Motown to the Beatles, but what does that matter when economic policies result in fewer jobs and smaller paychecks? More than one in three British manufacturing jobs have disappeared since the mid-1990's under the economists' "New Economy" regime. Manufacturing's share of GDP has declined, and Britain, once the world's largest manufacturing economy, now ranks behind the United States, China, Japan, Germany, and the Russian Federation. The streets around the Cavern Club, the old Liverpool Beatles haunt, are near deserted, save for an aging group of Californians, and we decline an offer to stand on the spot where the quartet once stood.

THE MERSEY HAS NOT ESCAPED the cultural impact. British Hindus consider it sacred, "the River Ganges of the north of England." The *Liverpool Echo* reported that "so many people turned up" at the 2007 "Ceremony of Immersion performed on an idol of the Elephant God, Lord Ganesh" that the rite had to be performed twice, with the Mersey ferry "crowded with Hindu celebrants." The ceremony included Hindus throwing replica cobras and other items into the river. Attendees included the Anglican bishop of Liverpool.

I imagine John Lennon would have found this state of affairs acceptable. Introduced to the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in 1967, Lennon traveled to India for "spiritual guidance." Anglican officials, coming full circle, allowed bell ringers to perform Lennon's "Imagine" at Liverpool's cathedral last year. "As a cathedral we do not shrink from debate," a church spokesman told the BBC. "We recognize the existence of other world views." The song includes the line, "Imagine there's no heaven. / It's easy if you try." Indeed.

Greg Kaza writes from Little Rock, Arkansas.

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The Last *Corrida*

Paseo de Hemingway goes nowhere now. I was at the last bullfight in Pamplona, the Catalan town beloved of Papa. On a stuffy night last July, I watched as a bull named Andador, with a flick of the horns identical to the one that had secured Spain her place in the World Cup Final some days earlier, ripped off a famous matador's ear—that deeply symbolic organ of which, from time immemorial, Spanish husbands threaten to deprive their wives' lovers—and then raised him overhead, like a bale of straw, in jealous triumph. In the ensuing weeks, Catalonia's regional government voted to ban bullfighting, while a month later, in August, following the rampage wrought by another bull on the spectators' terraces in Tafalla, it appeared inevitable that Navarra would follow suit.

Let us take sides. A distinctive tradition like the *corrida* is above all a point of view, and it behooves any intellectual worth his pair of gold-rim spectacles to defend the right of others to express it. Just as, following the maxim attributed to Voltaire, the good intellectual ought to be prepared to die—or at least to proclaim his readiness to die, while opening an offshore account and availing himself of a second passport—in defense of any opinion contrary to his own. And so, indubitably, I am against the bullfighting ban, as, incidentally, is the king of Spain, who is on record as saying that the day the European Community outlaws the sport will be the last day of Spain in the E.C.

In practice, as is often the case, things are a little more confusing. On arrival in Pamplona my wife and I had been asked to put on the costumes for the upcoming ritual murder, all white with red scarves, which are the uniform of the town for the duration of the San Fermin festivities. In Russians of any age and background, more surely, perhaps, than the black shirt in an Italian or a brown one in a German, this symbol stirs certain connotations—chiefly, I would argue, the persecution of the unarmed few by the armed many. A focal point of propaganda for the entire history of the Soviet regime was the heroic tale of Pavel Morozov, a Young Pioneer who ratted out his kulak of a dad to the secret police. In reality, of course, it was people like the elder Morozov who were the defenseless victims, and here we were in Pamplona, donning the clothes of their tormentors and cheering them on to the kill. Long before we entered the arena, it was clear that the bull was the individual in the story, while we and the rest of the townsfolk represented the bloodthirsty conformity of humankind.

A fighting bull like Andador weighs half a ton. If he had been up against a conformity armed with only a blade of Toledo steel, this would have brought to mind the ancient Russian sport of bearbaiting, in which the lone hunter wielded a knife-tipped stick called *rogatina*. As even the most sophisticated students of the Spanish ritual must admit, however, the baiting of the bull is less a hunt in a remote corner of the forest than a public execution. This involves several teams of brilliantly dressed and rather portly torturers, two of them mounted on horseback, with a combined weight of well over a ton.

Even that shameless discrepancy in weight categories one could stomach, perhaps, had it not been for the plating on the horses, reminiscent of the Kevlar armor of riot police. In vain does the hapless bull gore the horse, while the mounted *picador* sticks his pike into him with total impunity, at which point in the game even the onlooker blessed with a most sanguine disposition cannot but reflect that the whole premise of the spectacle is bloody unfair. And so, as the second of those dapper *hidalgos* went flying through the air—to be followed in no time at all by the matador's ear, together with its once proud, now irredeemably cuckolded owner—in the ensuing deathly hush only my wife's scream, in Russian, rang out over the hemorrhaging sand of the arena: "Serves you right, you bastards!"

Our Spanish-speaking Russian host, who comes to Pamplona every year, assured us that this sort of thing had not happened in living memory. Andador single-hornedly subverted the whole panoply of elaborate arrangements for his humiliation, complete with horses wearing Kevlar shields, fat louts armed with spears, and toffs brandishing swords. Once the martyr to conformity had been slaughtered and, like five others before him that evening, dragged away on a length of rope, our host took us to a celebratory dinner. I could not remember ever drinking to anyone's memory with more righteous abandon.

Nor could I remember ever feeling joy at discarding a masquerade costume. Yet the binning of that scarf was a joy, comparable in some ways to what I felt on takeoff when the Austrian airlines plane bearing me out of Moscow nearly 40 years ago was finally airborne. ◆

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Joe Ecclesia

Broken Windows

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

My schedule this past summer gave me the opportunity to attend daily Mass. Nearly every noon found me seated in the pews, garnering the gifts—fewer distractions, the bare-bones order of worship, the solace of quiet prayer—often missing on crowded Sundays. Those 40 minutes of reflection in the middle of a hectic day allowed me to recharge some spiritual batteries.

There were, of course, minor glitches in my attempts to focus on prayer and charge the engines of my soul. One of our priests read the Gospel in both Spanish and English, despite the fact that few or no Hispanics were present. The same priest several times lambasted bishops for holding to certain teachings and practices of the Church. Both good priests, I noticed, launched a homily against the legalists in our midst, traditional Catholics whom the priests regard as Pharisees, but neither priest has ever, to the best of my knowledge, spoken a word from the pulpit about Catholics who dissent from Church teaching.

Part of me was inclined to mark these practices as trifles. Like so many Americans, I am infected by the go-along get-along commandments now institutional in this country. Tolerance is king, with a sticky love of mankind for queen. I am certain you know what I mean, Your Excellency. Judging by what I read in your diocesan newspaper, you, like the rest of us, are adept in the language of mealy-mouth.

Then came a minor revelation. After each daily Mass, I would light a candle in the Marian chapel and offer up prayers for friends, the dead, and my family. One Thursday afternoon a stout female parishioner entered the chapel ahead of me and began lighting candles herself. One, two, three, four candles, then more and more candles, until she had created a bonfire of twenty or more in that dark place. She then extinguished the wooden stick that bore the flame and left the chapel.

This woman had not paid a dime for the candles. When the same event transpired a few days later—this time, the woman's teenage son added to the conflagration—I approached a parishioner who is as much a fixture in the church as the statues, one of those women who lead the rosary before Mass, act as lectors, dote on the priest, and generally behave as if they own the place. "She didn't pay, you say?" No, I answered. "Well, it's probably best not to say anything," she went on. "She'll probably stop after a while."

Two weeks later, the requested contribution for these small candles rose from 25 cents to 75. Too weak to address even so minor a misdeed, the church had punished all by levying higher prices on its candles.

AT THAT POINT came my revelation. I understood that, one, I would light my candles at home from now on; two, the woman would continue to fire up free candles no matter what the donation asked by the church; and three, the "broken windows" theory, that idea advanced by James Q. Wilson and others stating that crime in major cities could be reduced by attention to small details—fixing the broken windows in a neighborhood, cleaning up litter, banning beggary—might be equally applicable to the Church.

Fifty years ago, certain commentators touted Vatican II as the end to the Catholic "ghetto." By opening her doors and embracing the times, the Church, they predicted, would bring change to a fallen world. Do away with the Latin Mass and special devotions, soften the rigidity of certain doctrines, preach love rather than law, and the teaching of the Church would illumine the darkness.

What has happened instead, metaphorically speaking, is that the Church has become a real ghetto, a vast neighborhood of broken windows, crabgrass, rutted streets and cracked pavement, panhandlers, junkies, and gangs. Both the priesthood and religious orders have been crippled by diminished membership and sexual scandals. In numbers reflecting those of the general population, Catholics engage in premarital sex, divorce, and abortion. Though deceived in the past by Washington, you bishops continue to issue various pronouncements on healthcare and immigration, dull tools for politicians who bear only contempt for the Church and her leaders. Perhaps worst of all, catechetical ineptitude has ensured yet another generation ignorant of its faith, meaning that the problems of our ghetto will only worsen.

Your Excellency, a church that can't admonish a parishioner for petty theft is in trouble. From the fifth grader who can't say a Hail Mary to the remarried man who doesn't trouble with an annulment, from the newlyweds who have never heard of natural family planning to the graybeards and bluehairs who refer to God in the feminine, the Devil is, quite literally, in the details. ◆

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Goodbye to Gold and Glory

by Clyde Wilson

"A crocodile has been worshipped, and its priesthood have asserted, that morality required the people to suffer themselves to be eaten by a crocodile."
—John Taylor of Caroline

"THE FATHER OF WATERS now flows unvexed to the sea," Lincoln famously announced in July 1863. He was, according to a reporter, uncharacteristically "wearing a smile of supreme satisfaction" as he related the news of the surrender of Vicksburg.

Like many popular sayings about the war of 1861-65, Lincoln's words rest on certain unexamined assumptions. Why had the flow of the Mississippi been "vexed" to begin with? It is true the Confederates had forts guarding passages on the river. But these forts were not there to interfere with peaceful travel of the Mississippi—something which, in fact, Confederates devoutly desired and knew to be greatly in their interest. The forts were there to interrupt invasion by heavily armed gunboats and transports which had already established a record of bombarding undefended towns and landing thousands of men to loot, burn out, and murder noncombatants.

In fact, Lincoln wanted the Mississippi to be "vexed" as long as he was doing the vexing. The potential of New Orleans to become a Confederate free-trade port for the commerce of the world had been crushed in one of the first expeditions of the war. If the government could not control New Orleans to enforce its tariff on imports at the mouth of the Mississippi, then the Midwest would ship its produce to, and buy its cheaper goods in, New Orleans, even if it meant smuggling in evasion of U.S. law. The industry of the Northeast would no longer enjoy profitable "protection" of its captive markets, and commerce would no longer move to Northeastern ports. Not to mention that the Treasury might find itself with diminished funds with which the newly empowered Republicans could buy and reward supporters.

So much for emancipation of the Mississippi River.

Lincoln, of course, was also pleased by the simultaneous "victory" at Gettysburg, which had contributed mightily to "saving the Union." More of those unexamined sayings. Lee's army had not been defeated at Gettysburg; it had merely stopped attacking a much larger army on its own territory and returned home without any serious interference. And how about that "saving the Union"? As everyone had understood in earlier times (and many still did), the very act of "preserving the Union" by military conquest destroyed the Union and converted it into something else—a consolidated empire in which duly elected state governments were to be destroyed and a large part of the population was to be governed by force rather than consent. As H.L. Mencken commented, the Gettysburg Address is a very pretty composition, but it has it exactly backward as to which side was fighting for government of the people.

Neither had the war much to do with slavery, except that slavery helped to produce the immense crops of the South, which made up the vast majority of America's foreign trade, which the ruling interests of the North were not about to relinquish. Chronology here is important, as it is, indeed, in achieving clarity about any historical event. Large segments of Northern opinion at first received secession calmly: "Let the erring sisters go in peace." Southerners, however rashly and unwisely, were simply invoking the good old American founding principle of "consent of the governed." Abolitionists felt freed of contamination. But then the capitalists began to collar the editors and the politicians. The North could not afford to let the Southern economy get beyond its grasp. Lincoln announced that he would initiate no hostilities, but he would collect the tariff at the ports.

Nationalism was the major force of the 19th century, and Lincoln rested firmly on its two pillars: the idea that a strong centralized government over a large territory meant prosperity, at least for some, and the emotional force attached to the widespread feeling that "national greatness" was a supreme and sacred thing to be preserved at any cost. The odd marriage of economic interest and nationalist fervor has, through all of American history, motivated the desire for a strong and unchallengeable central government. It still does.

It is now established with near-Soviet rigor and unanimity that the war of 1861-65 was "caused by" slavery. Never mind that it explains nothing to assert that an event of such vast and revolutionary dimensions was "caused by" one thing. Never mind that an earlier, magisterial generation of American historians, much more learned and objective than the current crop, emphasized economic interests and cultural conflict. The war must be slavery and nothing but slavery because of obsession with race and the well-established benefits of victimhood; self-righteousness, which takes for granted that any resistance to the domination of the righteous must be evil; failure of historical imagination in inability to distinguish the domestic servitude of the South, as old as the Bible, from 20th-century enslavement by governments; and willful refusal to accept that the withdrawal of a polity from a union is not "treason."

The "causes" of the war were many, among them slavery. But, strictly speak-

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ing, what the war was "about" was the nature of the Union. Black slaves had been an integral part of American (not just Southern) society for well over two centuries, and nobody had gone to war either to keep them or to emancipate them. Indeed, Lincoln declared that he had neither the desire nor the power to interfere with slavery, and he would not know how to go about it even if he had the intent and the power. (Illinois did not admit black people to citizenship and sharply discouraged them from living there.) The South had no need to fight to "preserve slavery," which had long existed and was in no immediate peril. When the states declared that hostility to slavery was their reason for secession, they meant that they did not accept the right of ill-disposed, irresponsible outsiders to carry out an endless program of hateful slander and petty interferences with their daily life in a Union that their fathers and grandfathers had created for their liberty and well-being. Calhoun had warned 20 years before, "Now, I ask, if we have the right under the Constitution to hold the property, which none question, have we not also the right to hold it under the same sacred instrument in peace and quiet?"

But even if slavery was, in a sense, the cause of secession, that did not make it a cause of the war, for a war of conquest to prevent secession was a choice—a choice made even more questionable by the fact of Lincoln's unprecedented election by only two fifths of the people and the seceded states' declared willingness to negotiate in good faith.

Lincoln would not make war to free the slaves; but he would launch against other Americans a war of unprecedented scope and ferocity to *prevent secession*, in defiance of all previous understanding of the nature of the Union. Even Hamilton, in the *Federalist*, had promised that the proposed federal government would never be able to coerce a state. But Lincoln counted on the power of economic interest and the emotional fervor that mistook loyalty to a government for patriotism. Was America a consensual and dissolvable union of self-governing commonwealths? Or a consolidated empire in which the "consent of the governed," once given, was eternally binding? In essence, Lincoln was saying that the consent of the people was a one-time thing, and they were ever after bound to obey the political faction in control of the federal machinery.

THE NATURE OF THE UNION was and has been vastly debated. Much confusion results from busywork of the advocates of an unappealable central government to distort words and history and sneak precedents past the people by dubious judicial pronouncements. Anyone who will study the question deeply and honestly will have to agree that the weight of the evidence favors the secessionists. Madison tells us that the Constitution is to be interpreted by the people of the states, whose ratification only could and did give it any authority. We should think about the Constitution that was ratified by the states—not the proposal discussed in Philadelphia nor the Olympian musings of the *Federalist*, which were never ratified by anybody. Otherwise, we are stipulating that the rulers have some authority beyond the "consent of the governed," which is to jettison everything unique about the American understanding of government.

Before Lincoln, *United States* was always a plural rather than the unnatural singular noun it has become. This was true in every law, proclamation, treaty, treatise, and public discussion. The term *United States* meant the Union of the states, not the federal government which represented the Union in some of its business. Read the Constitution with this in mind. To "provide for the *common* defense and promote the *general* welfare" (emphasis mine). Treason against the United States consists in "levying war against *them*," something of which Lincoln was egregiously guilty. Lincoln never really addressed the constitutional issue except with a trio of whoppers—that the "Union" preceded the states of which it was composed, that the legitimate governments of 14 states were merely "combinations" of felons who were resisting the collection of taxes, and that governments in power could not allow themselves to be deprived of jurisdiction. He was not a political philosopher searching for truth. Though Lincoln was capable of a marvelous turn of phrase, he was on this occasion a politician justifying a dubious exercise of power with the tricks of a lawyer focused on winning a bad case.

It makes no difference that the Constitution allowed the Union to expand by the admission of new states. The new states were to be in every respect equal to the old. The Congress might govern a territory; it might admit a state into the Union, or not; it might be the largest landown-

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er in the state. But it could not create a state. According to the most fundamental American principle, only a sovereign people could adopt a constitution and create a commonwealth. This is why Jefferson in his last years regarded the attempt of the Northern majority in Congress to dictate a constitution to the people of Missouri as a "fire-bell in the night," which was likely the "death-knell of the Union." He thought slavery was a bad thing and wished something could be done about it. But the sovereignty of the people of the states was more vital, although it meant defending a new slave state and the right of the South to deal with the matter itself. In his last days he recommended that Virginia again declare state sovereignty and nullify federal legislation as it had done in 1798, and which South Carolina was to do a very few years later.

When Thomas Jefferson looked westward he saw succeeding generations of Americans creating new self-governing commonwealths. If the future generations wanted to go off on their own and form new confederacies, which he expected to happen in the west, that would not be a problem—they would still be Americans. He compared the new states to younger sons who were free to decide things for themselves. It was not the force of the federal government that held Americans together; it was their common blood and fellow feeling. But when Lincoln's lovers of "the Union" looked westward they saw natural resources to be exploited, new markets to be developed, more political offices to be filled—all enhancing the growing power of the "nation." Not to mention millions of immigrants, who would lower labor costs and increase the value of the free land Lincoln's backers were getting from the government.

Granted, the world has changed and become more complex. Granted, fascism and communism were evil things and had to be opposed by a powerful government (though not everything done for such purpose was necessary or proper). So, when communism fell, we should have returned to the dividends of peace and the freedom of limited government. Instead, the government has become ever more powerful and more expensive. You will look in vain in the Constitution for the people's grant of authority to consume their blood and treasure in pursuit of a global empire of "democratic capitalism." Every civilized person in the world was cured of such "national greatness" by the blinding light of Hiroshima, if not by the rivers of blood at Verdun. But the appetite for "greatness" in rulers with too much power is insatiable; and it always ends in disaster for the people caught up in it—like the Germans and Japanese in 1945.

We have long believed, with some justification, that Lincoln's strong indissoluble national government has promoted our prosperity and nurtured the claims of our country to greatness. Has anyone noticed that it's not working anymore? That the prosperity the unreachable and uncheckable government is promoting is mostly that of the international immensely rich, and that a multicultural global empire is not at all what we had in mind when we thought of the qualities that made our country great?

Clyde Wilson is an historian but doubts that people, especially politicians, will learn anything from history.

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Collegiate Bread and Circuses

by William Murchison

Ah, the good ol' days! If only they were as frolicsome and fulfilling as they commonly seem in the rearview mirror! All that notwithstanding, the shaky balance that, in university settings, once seemed to prevail between academics and athletics gives the past a certain golden glow.

You know what I'm talking about if you recall the college scene of 40, even 30, years ago. Certainly, dumb athletes roamed about, majoring in P.E. and dating the campus cuties. Certainly, coaches made too much money, causing faculty senates to lament the gaps between authentic achievement—their kind—and the sham varieties on display in local stadiums. The proper order of things might be out of whack at institutions dedicated supposedly to the training of young intellects and the preservation of eternal truths. Yet at institutions of this sort, things are generally out of whack one way or another. At least the head football coach didn't make $5.1 million a year, as does the head coach at the University of Texas, Mack Brown; his wages and assured community standing come to mind in the aftermath of the Almost-Debacle this summer involving the Big 12 Conference.

The Big 12 was national news for a few days in June. Key members, led by Almighty Texas (one of my two *alma maters*, I am bound to note), seemed intent on bailing out for some place where they could get more money. Goodness, what would happen if they did? Superconferences would appear, to the detriment of mellow October Saturdays at smaller, poorer institutions. The superconferences, with their lucrative TV contracts and regional, if not national, fan bases, would dominate college athletics, meaning, primarily, college football.

It didn't happen. Texas, wealthiest of the wealthy Big 12 powers, pulled back at the last minute. The Longhorns would stay where they had been since bolting from the old Southwest Conference a decade and a half ago (in the process, destroying a set of prized, never-to-be-reconstructed local rivalries). Other potential fugitives decided that, if the Big 12 was good enough for UT, it was good enough for them. Whew! A net loss of two schools—Nebraska and Colorado—to other leagues left the Big 12 with just ten teams. What's in a name anyway, when the pay is so good? Because that was in fact what this summer's secessionist movement was about: filthy lucre—the filthier and more plentiful, the better.

It probably wasn't what the founders of the universities of Paris or Padua had in mind when they went into business hundreds of years ago—squads of athletes and their admirers overshadowing, in the public eye, the works of the mind. But so it has fallen out. To tell the truth, the academic side of the academic enterprise isn't what it used to be, what with tenure, grade inflation, diversity requirements, and growing disdain for the civilization of the West. I'll get to that in a minute.

Meanwhile, from a practical standpoint, the universities' cave-in to the sporting side of things makes a certain kind of sense. Filthy lucre comes in handy. And who's got it these days? Television has. TV exposure, with corresponding rights to divvy up the fruits of that exposure, was at the heart of the aborted threat to the life of the Big 12. Not the wish to bring more students into Saturday-afternoon concord as they perch on metal benches; not sentimentality about historic rivalries; not the loyalties and attachments such rivalries can excite. The $1.2 billion distributed by the conference to member schools over the past 14 years wasn't enough. It was like Wall Street (and Edward G. Robinson in *Key Largo*). The schools wanted more. And, beyond that, still more.

Poor things. The University of Texas in 2008, the last year for which figures are available, made a mere $87.6 million in football revenues, for a profit of $65 million. Two non-Big 12 teams—Ohio State and Georgia—pulled in $68.2 million and $65.2 million, respectively. At the six high-dollar conferences that same year—a wrenching year for the economy, let us recall—revenues rose five percent. Translated into cash, this meant average revenues of $31 million for each of the six conferences' 66 schools. Just four of the schools actually lost money on football: Duke, Wake Forest, Syracuse, and Connecticut.

The coaches, too, did well. Though less gaudily compensated than Mack Brown, four fellow head coaches—Nick Saban of Alabama, Urban Meyer of Florida, Bob Stoops of Oklahoma, and Lane Kiffen of USC—pulled down more than four million dollars each. Even some assistant coaches have begun making out like, well, head coaches. According to *USA Today*, six assistants were in line this year for salaries of more than $650,000. A sports economist, Andrew Zimbalist, reasonably submits that such salaries "are sending a ridiculous message to students at institutions where athletics are supposed to be complementary to academics."

So what, if anything, does one do about it? Do not the aforementioned gazillions proceed from the uninterrupted workings of the free marketplace? DeLoss Dodds, athletic director of the University of Texas (2009-10 salary: $627,109), when asked whether a coach is ever worth five million dollars per year, replied, "Probably not, but it's the marketplace." It is for a fact. The Obama administration might handle this unfortunate reality by instructing

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a team of economics professors to advise Coach how much he's worth; likewise, by constructing a mechanism of price controls for television sports packages. Then we could work up (or down) to the expedient of assigning bureaucrats to enforce nonmarketplace outcomes such as occur when one team wallops another. (Doesn't victory itself weaken our sense of cultural unity?) I'm kidding. Barely.

One proposal for redressing the balance involves persuading Congress to lift the antitrust exemption for college sports, thereby allowing schools to perpetrate what might be called, under the Sherman Act, a conspiracy in restraint of trade.

In fact, the problem is cultural much more than economic. Americans have come to thrive on bread-and-circus games—*panem et circenses*. Why shouldn't universities sponsor such enterprises, with far greater intensity and at much greater expense than was the case 40 years ago, when sports was more or less just . . . sports. Modern universities, after all, have assigned themselves large public purposes, starting with the absorption of every high-school graduate not thoroughly convinced he—or she—wants to be a an electrician rather than a literature professor dedicated to studying Transgendered Folk Poets of the Southern Caucasus, 1817-22. The universities perform their public tasks, what's more, with rigorous concern for distributive justice: so many women students (to the point that female undergrads now outnumber their male counterparts); so many women faculty members; so many members of racial and ethnic minorities, not to mention sexual, on the theory that a university is in the business of painting America's portrait rather than improving her mind. The imbalance of ideology that routinely occurs at every level of academia—save, perhaps, on the football team—is another instance of academia's quest for justice. Knowing precisely what must be done to change our society, and how to effect that change, liberals flock to faculties hospitable to change of a certain order. There they proceed to drown out countervailing theories and procedures.

The glance in that rearview mirror I mentioned at the outset suggests—persuades, in fact—that universities haven't changed just in terms of overpaid coaches and screaming fans. Turning themselves into instruments of entertainment and justice has made too many—possibly most—of them different places from those that dewy-eyed alums recall from decades past. If, at most campuses, serious students and serious teachers still seek and find one another, political babble can make it hard to hear. Take the University of Texas. Around the time of the Big 12 uproar, I heard that administrators at my onetime university are gravely weighing calls to rename a dormitory whose namesake—a long-dead law-school dean—was a member of the Reconstruction-era Ku Klux Klan (thus beating the late Sen. Robert Byrd to the punch by about 70 years). Boy, that'll teach those dead Confederates a lesson! The University of Texas (founded 20 years after the War) just might, to fulfill its sense of mission, up and whop 'em a good one. A small instance, this, of what's wrong with modern academia. Add up a bunch of small instances, and no small problem comes into view.

There's one thing about the football team: Coaches and players hold to a very un-21st-century creed, the creed of winning; the creed of sending an opponent home in sorrow, disgrace, or, if possible, both. One might reasonably wish for less expensive, less rambunctious bread and circuses than the universities presently put before their constituents. At least the job gets done and, in the Big 12 Conference, gets done right. Accountability reigns. Orders is orders.

It could be—I have to admit the scandalous possibility—we should accept without murmur society's judgment that the University of Texas head football coach is entitled to eight times the pay the school president receives. The athletic side of the university enterprise actually works the way it's designed to work. How about a student-faculty committee to find out why and what we do next?

Corresponding editor William Murchison is a syndicated columnist.

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On the Sullivan Translation of David

by Timothy Murphy

This is the first part of a speech Timothy Murphy has delivered to Catholic and Protestant congregations on the High Plains. The second part will appear in a subsequent issue. Alan Sullivan, a frequent contributor to Chronicles, *died on July 9, right after finishing his last work of translating David into meter, and we shall miss his contributions of prose and verse.*

THE SUMERIAN EPIC *Gilgamesh* predates King David by 2,000 years, so we know that poetry was an ancient art in the time of the king. But David is the first poet in human history whom we know by name, and we regard him as the father of lyric poetry. I also regard him as the most influential of all poets, because his poems are revered as divine writ by 3.2 billion people—Jewish, Christian, and Islamic. David is an exceptionally gifted formal poet, whose works are exactly structured in strophes and stiches that predate our lineation and stanzas. He employs assonance (like vowel sounds), alliteration (like consonant sounds), internal rhyme, exotic forms of parallelism, paranomasia (think of that as a spiritually serious pun!), acrostics—in short, a dazzling array of formal devices. His rhetorical devices are equally sophisticated. But he has been singularly unfortunate in his translations into English.

We Catholics hear a reading from the Psalms about 355 days each year—about half those readings from David, the other half from his followers, such as Asaph, a major poet in his own right. Yet the congregations to whom I read don't even think of David as a poet, because they hear him only in prose, lineated in versions such as the Revised Standard (RSV), glorious in the case of the King James, but nevertheless prose. My friend and mentor Richard Wilbur, the great verse translator of our age and a church lector so devoted that he once read 40 days straight in Lent, has lamented with me for many years our lack of an adequate formal translation. The famous Scottish hymnodist Isaac Watts devoted much of his life to producing rhyming translations that could be put to music and sung, but his versions depart so far from David's intent that the Catholic Church would never countenance their use in the Mass.

Alan Sullivan was a fine poet and formidable verse translator who was my literary partner for nearly four decades. I collaborated with Alan on his translation of the *Beowulf*, now widely studied in the Longman Anthologies of English and World Literature. For five years he battled leukemia and lymphoma. When he was first diagnosed, he had me read him the Psalms. I did so twice, in their entirety. An unbeliever, he experienced an epiphany on December 12, 2008, and within weeks he received the Sacraments and was admitted to full communion in the Roman Catholic Church. At Easter 2009 he undertook a metrical translation of the 78 poems the Jews attribute to David as a thank-offering to God for granting him the gift of faith at the end of his life.

Early on in the project Alan enlisted the assistance of Seree Cohen Zohar, a scholar of Classical Hebrew and scion of the ancient priestly tribe. Lacking Hebrew, Alan relied on Seree to straighten out the mistranslations that occur in every English version from the King James forward. It was Alan's objective to produce powerful metrical translations that a trained lector could read forcefully yet, within the confines of meter, achieve a level of accuracy that surpasses any predecessor version and fully takes advantage of modern scholarship. What follows are some of David's masterpieces in Sullivan's new translations. Here is a look at three versions of a little jewel, Psalm 133. (Although the Bible does not ascribe it to David, there is general agreement among scholars that it is his.) Here is the King James:

> Behold, how good and how
> pleasant *it is* for brethren to
> dwell together in unity!
> *It is* like the precious ointment
> upon the head, that ran down
> upon the beard, *even* Aaron's
> beard: that went down to the
> skirts of his garments;
> As the dew of Hermon, *and as*
> *the dew* that descended upon
> the mountains of Zion: for
> there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for
> evermore.

Here is the Revised Standard Version:

> Behold, how good and pleasant it is
> when brothers dwell in unity!
> It is like the precious oil upon
> the head,
> running down upon the beard,
> upon the beard of Aaron,
> running down on the collar of
> his robes!
> It is like the dew of Hermon,
> which falls on the mountains of
> Zion!
> For there the LORD has commanded the blessing,
> life for evermore.

And here is Sullivan, with stresses capitalized to guide you in saying the poem aloud:

> BeHOLD, it is GOOD and
> PLEASant
> when BRETHren DWELL

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unITed:
it is LIKE a PRECious OIL
DROPping from HEAD to
BEARD,
EVen the BEARD of AAron,
LONG as his LIMitless VIRtue;
it is LIKE the DEW of HERmon
DROPping on ZIon's
MOUNtains
where the LORD beSTOWED his
BLESSing:
LIFE for EVerMORE.

The King James is stately, beautiful prose. The RSV is stately free verse, with anywhere from three to five stresses per line. But to my ear its random placements of stressed and unstressed syllables rob it of any real rhythmic power. Sullivan's version, by contrast, is iambic trimeter, three firm stresses in every line. Read aloud all three for yourself, and you'll hear what I assert.

But what are we to make of the close of verse two, where the translators of the KJV and the RSV extend the great simile of the anointing oil of Aaron running down from his head to his beard, even to the extent of running onto his robe (the hem of his robe, in some versions)? Seree Zohar believes that these translators have mistakenly interpreted *middah* for "the hem of a garment," based on one of several secondary meanings of the Hebrew word. The Septuagint has *endumatos*, and Saint Jerome has *vestimentorum*, so this interpretation long precedes the English language. Instead, Seree Zohar explains that *middah* ("measure") refers to the measure of the prophet, not his garment; and that therefore David has woven a second simile within his second verse, likening the length of Aaron's beard to his virtue, an exquisite trope reinforced by the image of dew, an infinite phenomenon.

Psalm 133 is a Song of Ascents, or a Song of Degrees, to be sung when approaching Jerusalem or ascending the steps of the Temple. So is 131, another of David's short poems; and I want to cite it as translated by the RSV and Sullivan to reinforce my metrical argument for the Sullivan versions. Here is the RSV:

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up,
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with
things
too great and too marvelous for
me.
But I have calmed and quieted
my soul,
like a child quieted at its mother's breast;
like a child that is quieted is my
soul.
O Israel, hope in the LORD
from this time forth and for
evermore.

Given my choice as David's lector, I usually prefer to read the RSV because it comes closer to poetry than any version available to us. But despite the careful lineation of the foregoing, it is rhythmically incoherent, no discernible pattern to the placement of stresses, which range from three to five per line, with no rhetorical justification. Contrast the trimeters of Sullivan:

LORD, my HEART is not
HAUGHty;
my EYES not PROUDly
RAISED;
nor DO I MEDdle in MATters
too MARveLOUS for ME.
I have GENTled and SILenced
my SOUL
like a CHILD WEANED from its
MOTher;
my SOUL is a WEANling
CHILD.
ISrael, HOPE in the LORD,
NOW and for EVerMORE.

And note that the poetry in Sullivan is not limited to its meter. Consider the alliteration of heart/haughty and meddle/matters/marvelous in just the first verse. This is music to move the heart in English.

Timothy Murphy is the author of several collections of poetry, including Very Far North *(Waywiser Press).*

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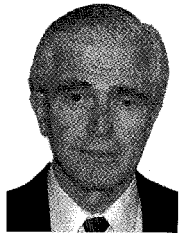
George McCartney



2-D or 3-D: That Is the Question

In 1953, I saw a three-dimensional film for the first time. It was a André de Toth's *House of Wax*, with that perfect slice of ham, Vincent Price, playing the curator of a wax museum in New York City, *circa* 1910. Having gone bats after a fire destroyed his original establishment, Price decides he can best repopulate his rebuilt museum by snatching beautiful women from the streets and transforming them into mannequins by spraying their comely bodies with molten wax.

At 11, I was entranced. As I watched, the screen's frame seemed to melt away, and I entered into the space of the narrative unfolding before me. It seemed I might reach out and protect the lovely young women fleeing from Price through midnight streets, an illusion that definitely had its appeal. Even more enthralling, objects were coming right off the screen. In one scene, policemen attempting to capture Price in his laboratory rammed a poker through its wooden door, doing little to dislodge it but scaring up plenty of screams from the audience. That poker came thrusting into the orchestra until it was right under my nose. I knew instantly that this was my acid test for 3-D aesthetics: If things came off the screen, the film won my stamp of approval.

3-D films have been around for quite a while. Some were made in the silent period, and a spate of them came out in the early 50's when Hollywood was trying to wow audiences away from that upstart medium, television. They never took permanent hold, however. This is probably because they require special glasses to see the stereoscopic effect of two filmed images projected an eyes'-width apart to simulate normal vision.

As I write, Hollywood is betting once again on 3-D—this time, with new and improved peepers. If it pays off, 3-D may inaugurate an entertainment change as thoroughgoing as the introduction of sound in 1929 and color in the late 1930's. Soon we may be watching a wizened Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones swinging grumpily from the end of his whip into the orchestra seats to snag the holy grail of box-office returns.

But will the public wear those glasses, however sophisticated? I was OK with them at 11, but today I have glasses of my own, thank you. And what about the higher ticket price charged for the privilege of seeing bullets, babes, and bruisers fly from the screen? As unsure as 3-D's future is, one thing is certain: Should the process prevail as did sound and color, film's vocabulary and syntax will be utterly changed, perhaps not for the better. When films became talkies, they lost much of their visual ingenuity. Silent filmmakers had made an art of showing sound. A villain would shoot a gun, and the camera would cut to a flock of birds scattering into the sky. With sound, however, the gun's bald bang was enough. When color showed up, audiences began to lose interest in film *noir*'s crisp, high-contrast black-and-white cinematography as well as the velvety monochromatic luminescence that had molded Gene Tierney and Ingrid Bergman into the beauties they would never quite be in color. Despite these aesthetic losses, Hollywood was convinced, with some evidence, that the public wanted as much aural and visual fidelity as technically possible.

The better film becomes at creating the illusion of reality, the more apt it is to sacrifice artistic expression. This is especially true of 3-D films. The ones I've seen recently have for the most part given in to the temptation to make visual high fidelity their primary goal. There's no denying that *Avatar* and *Alice in Wonderland* look spectacularly real. After the initial astonishment of seeing a flat screen dissolve itself into the third dimension, however, the illusion becomes surprisingly vapid. It's a little like those stereoscopic photos in a View-Master. Delightful, certainly, but how many can you look at before you've seen enough?

Furthermore, 3-D sacrifices the pleasing defects of 2-D cinematography. What are these defects? Presenting the solid world in two dimensions involves distorting your subject matter. Anyone who takes photographs knows this. Regardless of what shows up in the viewfinder, the resulting photo will be weirdly distorted unless the photographer takes precautions.

Here's an example. You prepare to snap a picture of an unsuspecting friend. At the last possible moment, she sees what you're doing and throws her hand toward the camera to defend herself against undesired replication. The resulting photo shows a huge hand in the foreground that dwarfs your friend's head and body behind it. This is because the camera does not register perspective as do our eyes. When you saw your friend thrust her hand toward your camera, you saw it in 3-D and it looked its normal size, proportionate to the rest of her. When it's rendered in two dimensions, however, perspective is

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lost, and the hand swells to Brobdingnagian proportions.

Directors and their cinematographers are generally careful to avoid such visual infelicities. They arrange objects and actors within their shots so that they don't seem bizarrely out of proportion to one another. There are times, however, when distorted perspective is just the ticket. Take an early scene from Hitchcock's 1951 black-and-white feature, *Strangers on a Train*. Congressional aide Guy Haines (Farley Granger) accidentally meets Bruno Antony (Robert Walker) on a train traveling to Washington, D.C. The stranger is beguiling but dismayingly well informed about Guy's affairs, most particularly his unhappy marriage and his current romance with the daughter of the senator for whom he works. Having charmed Guy so that his misgivings are allayed, Bruno invites him to lunch in his private compartment. The next scene opens with the two men sitting across from each other over a dining table. On the extreme right side of the screen, we see a seemingly huge two-pointed object in the foreground, something like a black mitre. After a few seconds, it becomes apparent that this object comprises a pair of expensively shod feet. Bruno is reclining, and he has thrust his legs into the foreground. Most directors would have avoided positioning an actor in this manner. The two-dimensional image makes Bruno's shoes appear preposterously large compared with the actors sitting less than a couple of feet farther from the camera's lens. Rather than hiding 2-D's distortion, Hitchcock made it work for him.

Had we witnessed this scene being recorded on the film's set, we would not have noticed anything unusual. Our eyes in conjunction with our brains would have automatically compensated for seeing in depth. This is because we have "learned" perspective without realizing it and "know" that objects farther from our eyes look smaller in relation to those closer to us. Psychologists have a term for this reflexive interpretation of visual data: size constancy. We realize that things do not shrink or swell because they're farther or nearer to us. The camera, however, can make no such interpretive compensation.

HITCHCOCK inventively and systematically employed the camera's distortion in *Strangers* as he did in many of his films. He repeatedly shot Walker in the foreground so that his feet, his head, his entire body dwarf the other actors in the middle distance. Consequently, he appears to be a dominating force. His gargantuan shoes announce that he is about to run roughshod over Guy's life. Appropriately so, since Bruno is something more than an antagonist. He is the metaphoric embodiment of the monstrous if unacknowledged anger welling up in Guy. His lower-class wife has become an inconvenience to his ambitions, and he wants to be rid of her, but she refuses to agree to a divorce. Phoning the senator's daughter to tell her of this impasse, he uncharacteristically loses control and shouts that he could strangle his spouse. While the restrained, career-conscious Guy would never do such a thing, Bruno would and does. Bruno is Guy's own stifled will brutally asserting itself regardless of decorum and morality. Using two-dimensional cinematography, Hitchcock marvelously visualized the argument between prudence and impulse that lurks within us all.

So, the question is this: Will 3-D reduce films to animated View-Master spectacles, so realistic as to be nearly indistinguishable from the reality they mechanically record, and thus leaving little space for art to create its magic? For an answer, we return to Hitchcock and his one foray into 3-D, *Dial M for Murder*. This 1954 film is far from Hitchcock's best, but it illustrates how a masterful director can artfully employ 3-D technology. In the film's climactic scene, a thug is strangling Grace Kelly. The would-be murderer has Kelly flattened across a desktop as he tightens a scarf around her neck. To defend herself, she desperately reaches for a weapon. It's at this moment that 3-D proves its aesthetic worth. Kelly stretches her arm backward over her head seemingly reaching right into the audience. Finally, her fingers find a pair of scissors. So armed, she swings the scissors over her head and plunges them into her assailant's back. This is so cleverly staged that the audience cannot fail to sense, however subliminally, that it has participated in the killing. The scene perfectly serves one of Hitchcock's abiding preoccupations. In most of his films, he sought to implicate the audience in the violence they had come to enjoy at a safe, voyeuristic distance. When Kelly's hand comes through the screen to seize the scissors as though from our hands, we're no longer spectators in the dark but her bloodstained accomplices. Hitchcock implies that the scene's brutality is what we've come for, and he's not going to allow us to escape our responsibility for what we've seen. Bruno's 2-D shoes may be marvelously monstrous, but they don't have anything on Kelly's grasping 3-D desperation.

So what will it be in the cinematic sweepstakes, 3-D or 2-D? With those pesky glasses in the equation, no one can tell. I can say this, however: If 3-D prevails, I will miss 2-D in much the same way I miss the expressiveness of black and white and an earlier generation missed the eloquent silence of pre-talkie productions. At the same time, I take solace in knowing there will always be inspired filmmakers who will find ways to make poetry from even the most literal-minded, reality-obsessed of our media. ◆

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Taki Theodoracopulos

End the War

THE TRINITY COLLEGE Historical Society, the debating arm of Trinity College, Dublin, kindly invited yours truly to open the debate season by defending the motion "This House would get high." Alas, I had to refuse, as I was leaving for America, but the motion did sound interesting. Once upon a time I was the greatest anti-drug campaigner this side of Mexico, until I grew up and became very wise. I now believe not only that the war on drugs is unwinnable, but that it is the cause of most of the ills supposedly caused by drugs.

But first I must declare an interest, as most phonies declare to show themselves whiter than white.

Drugs were no problem whilst I was growing up in the 50's. At least not among the jocks and swells I knew. The ones who took them were actors, artists, and other exotic types. Even in Vietnam I never touched the stuff. I was an athlete and a boozer, and drugs, as far as I was concerned, were for losers. I first tried cocaine in the late 70's, when the sons of one of the richest Greek ship owners offered, and insisted I take it. I obviously liked it, and after a while I began to buy it myself. In 1984 I was busted in London, pleaded guilty, and received a four-month prison sentence. My friend Peregrine Worsthorne, editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, wrote to my *Spectator* editor Charles Moore that, however it would grieve him to do so, in view of the fact I had been so vehemently antidrug, Charles must now fire me. Moore answered straight to the point: "If Taki were our religious correspondent he would be fired immediately. In view that he's our high life correspondent, we expect him to be high at times." Perry found this very funny and showed me his correspondence with Charles after I got out.

And now let us go straight to the point. I learned nothing in jail except how criminals conceal drugs. I was in a tough place full of hardened types, and the few people who were in there for drugs were not pushers but users. And very much abused as a result. Let's face it. Millions upon millions of otherwise law-abiding people are being criminalized because they feel like having the odd joint. Just the money spent chasing after and prosecuting these people could be put to better use. Governments simply will not accept the truth, which is that the demand for drugs is too great and the supply of drugs too profitable, and that the war on drugs was lost long ago.

AND THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE: booze. I have no facts or figures on this, but I will bet the farm that booze has killed more people than drugs have, especially when we consider those driving under the influence. People die of booze every day, but we only read about some rock star overdosing and get on our puritan horse. Billions are spent on drug prevention every year by Western governments, yet the problem is getting worse. Recreational drugs such as pot and cocaine are here to stay, and the quicker the prigs in Washington and London accept this, the fewer murders of innocents will take place in Mexico, Peru, and Colombia. (After all, the last three U.S. presidents took drugs and yet made it to the Oval Office.)

Which brings me to Prohibition. Look what it did for Al Capone, Amb. Joe Kennedy, and various other gangsters. Made them rich beyond their wildest dreams. Look what the prohibition of drugs has done for the Karzai family, the Escobars, and the El Chappos of this world. The diminutive Mexican (*El Chappo* means "dwarfish") is reputed to make $40 billion *per annum* in gross sales to the gringos. He has also kidnapped hundreds if not thousands of unsuspecting farmers, smuggled them across the U.S. border in underground tunnels, and put them to work in drug laboratories or plantations. When they've outlived their usefulness, Chappo has had them killed and thrown into mass graves. Yet despite such outrages, pompous know-nothing politicians still advocate a war on drugs.

In August alone, 72 bodies were discovered in Mexico without anyone having a clue as to who killed them or why. Well, I'll tell you. *Narcotraficantes* did it and will continue to do it until drugs are declared legal. However one views the argument, whether on libertarian, economic, or sociopolitical grounds, the case against prohibition is a no-brainer. I suspect that the war on drugs is driven by those who gain from it. Politicians and big-government advocates, mostly. Otherwise it is a crime not to decriminalize drugs and make the drug barons go to work for a living.

Personally, I am very lucky. My two children hate drugs, although both have tried the odd joint. Druggies are bores, but not as boring as drunks. I am known to be a boozer, but I become a bore only when I booze too much. Cocaine I can take or leave, and I'd rather leave it, but it's booze that has harmed me in the long run.

All together now: Give up the war on drugs and save Western civilization! ◆

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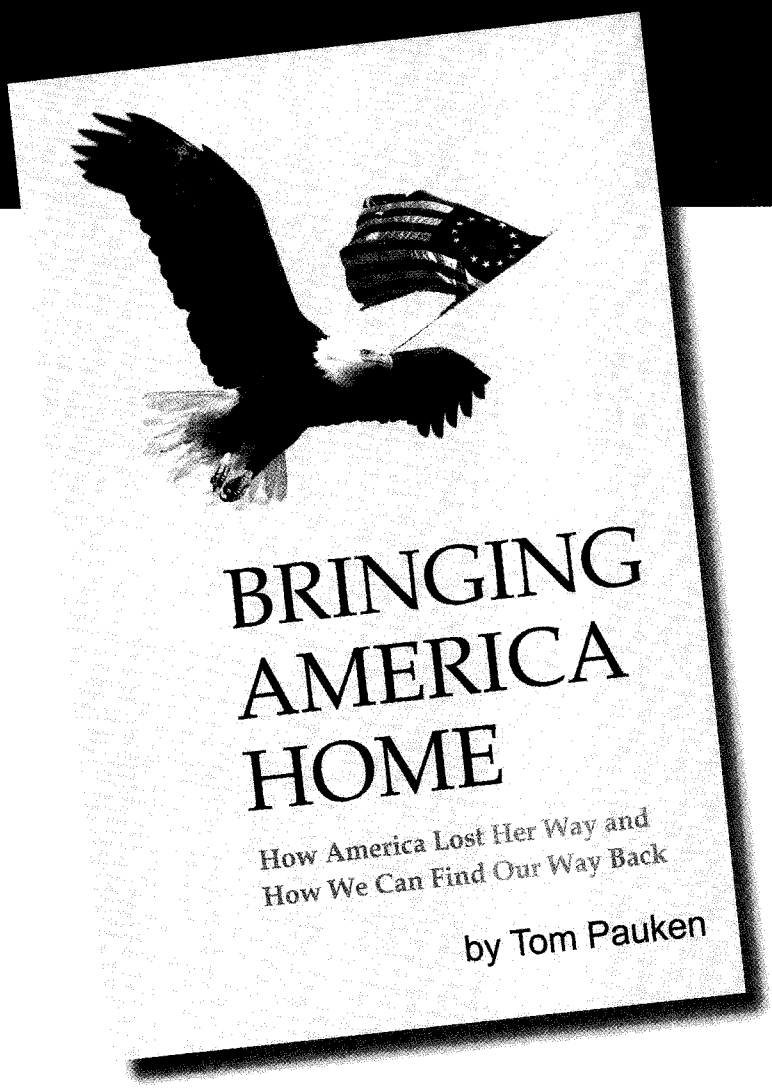

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